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Atlantic

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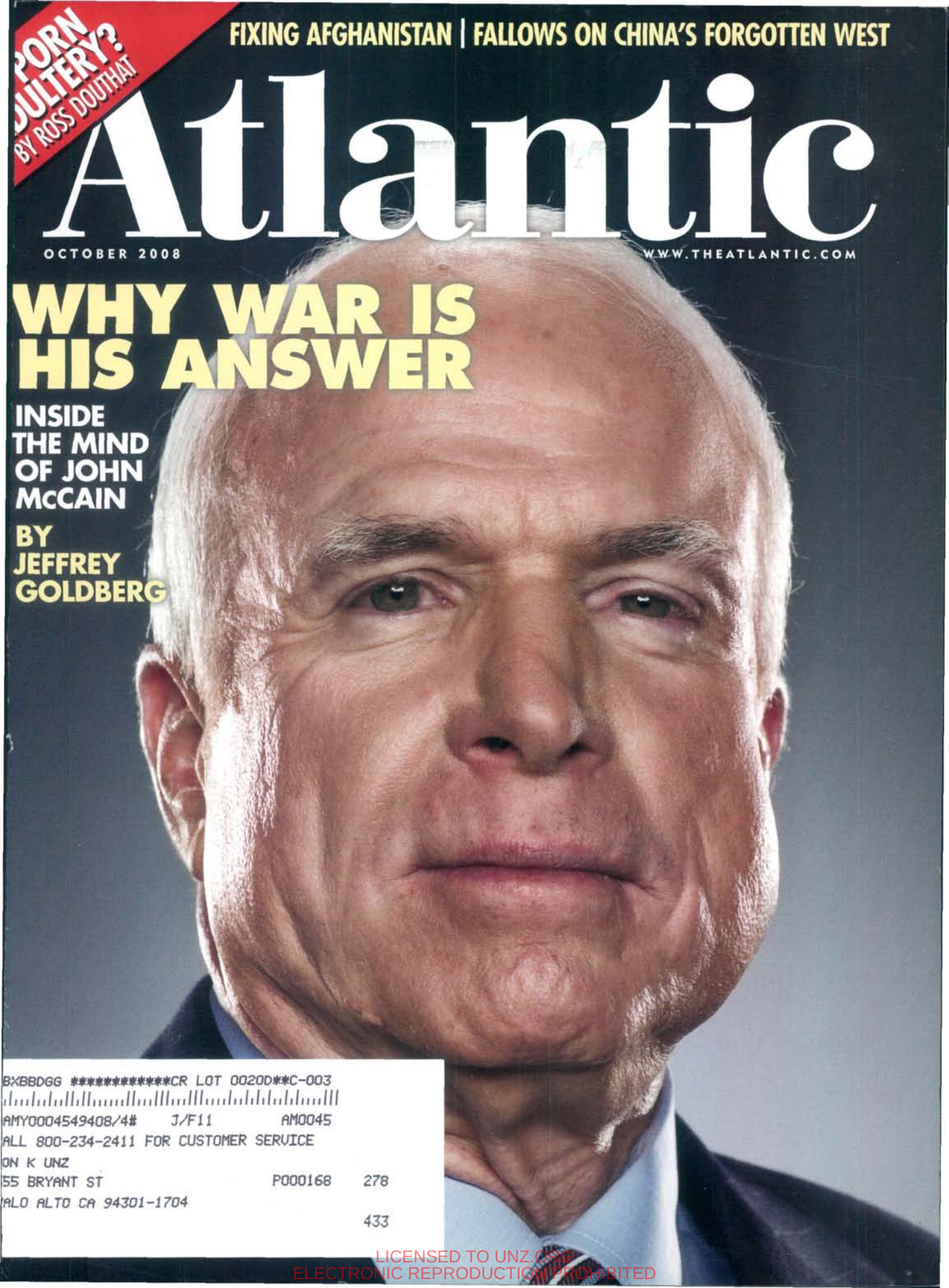
INSIDE THE MIND OF JOHN McCAIN

BY JEFFREY GOLDBERG



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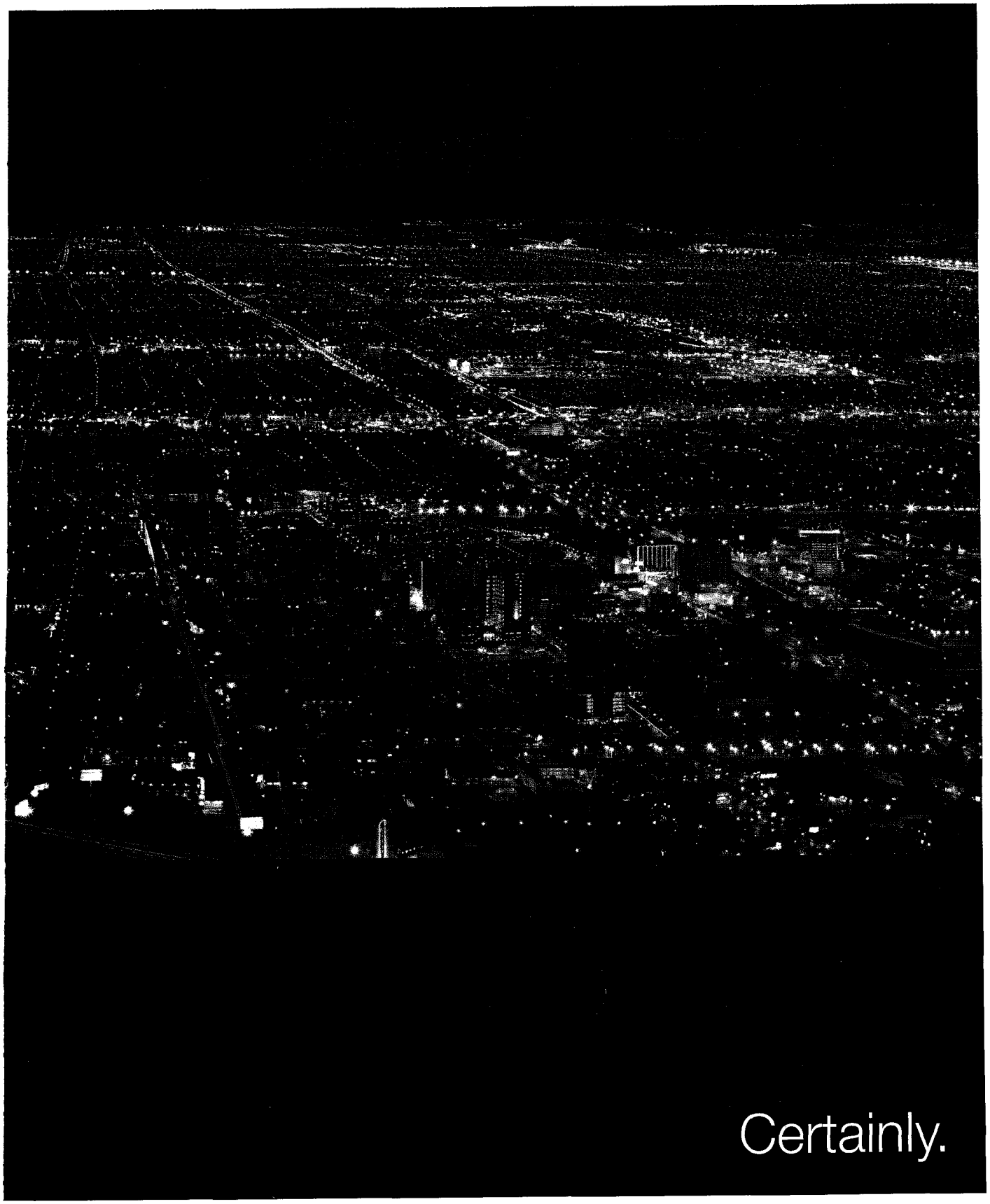

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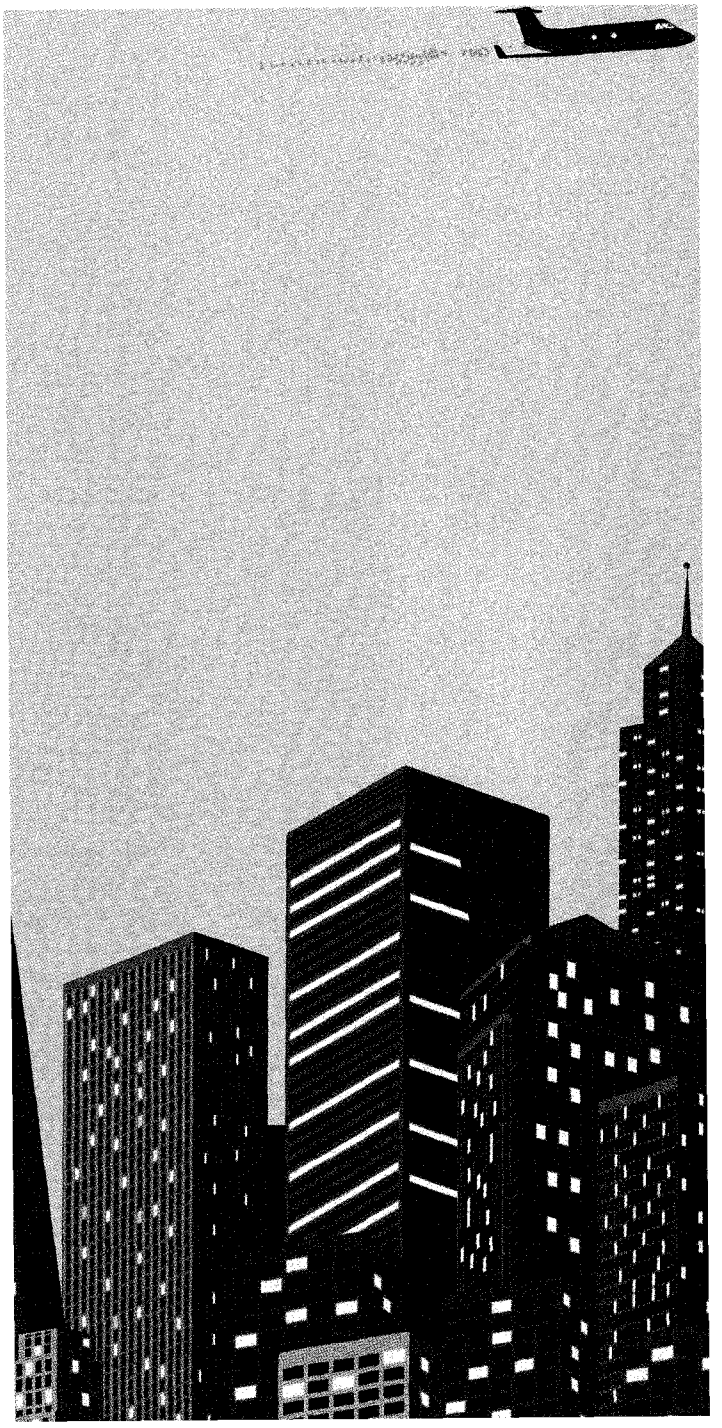

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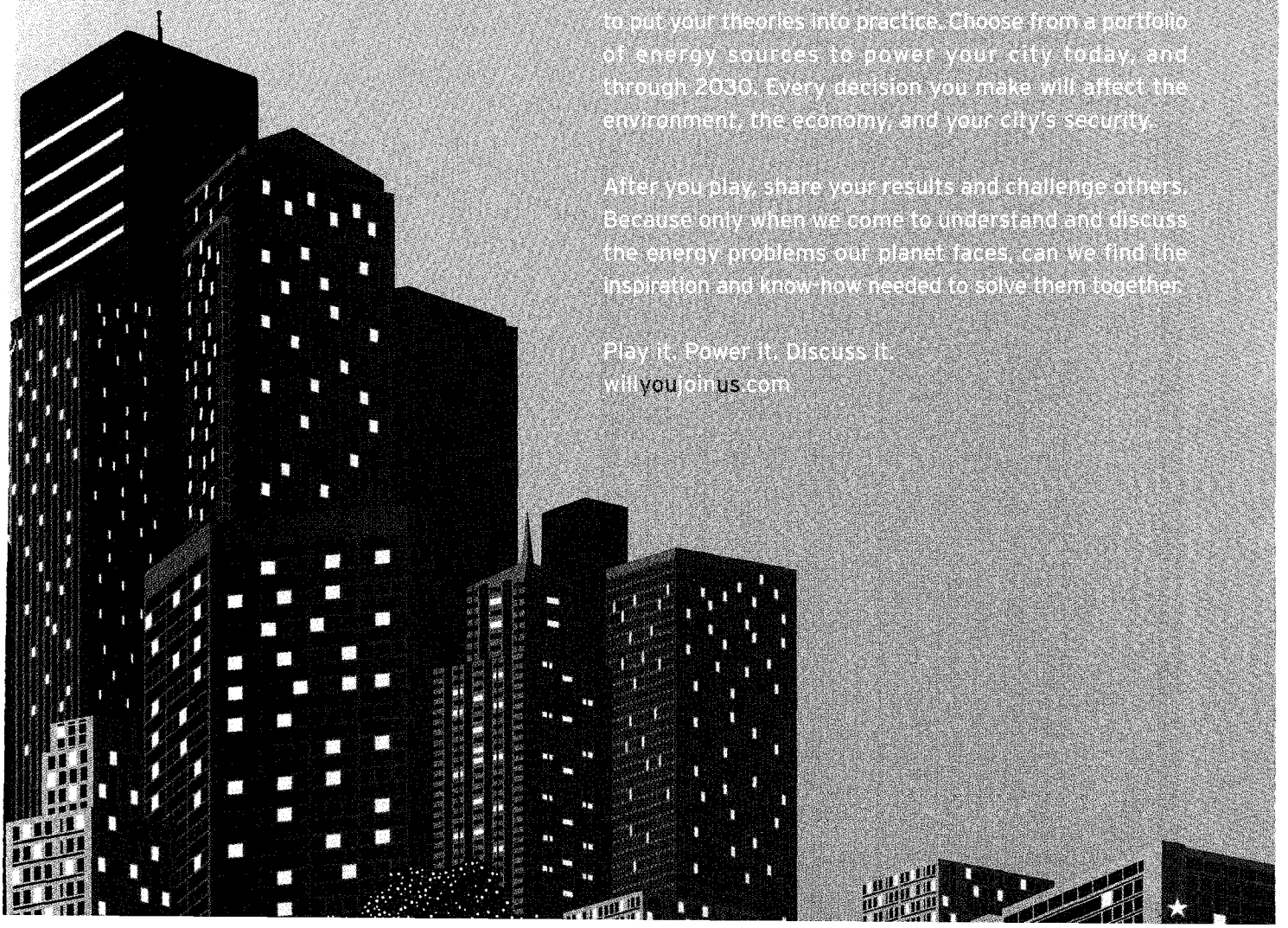

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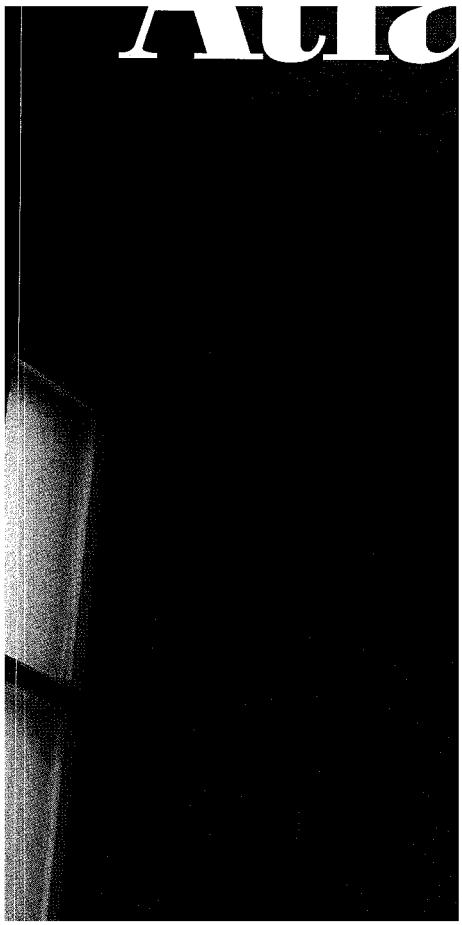

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THE Atlantic

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PHOTO BY ARIANA LINDQUIST

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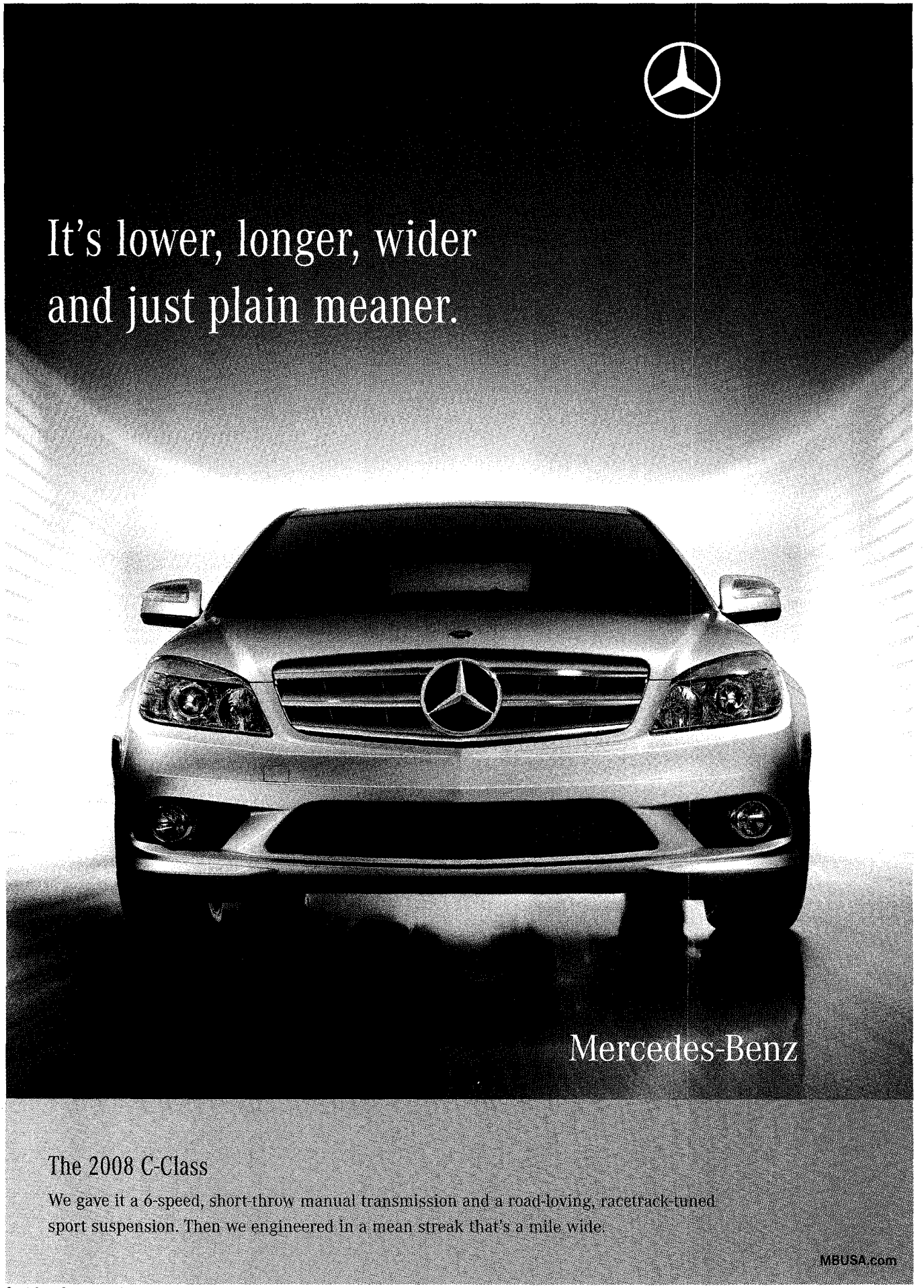

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OUR BRAINS ON GOOGLE

Nicholas Carr ("Is Google Making Us Stupid?," July/August *Atlantic*) put into words the unease I've felt since the school night a few years back when our home Internet connection went down. My eighth-grader's assignment that evening was simple: write one page, single-spaced, on any historical figure from World War I. When attempts to resuscitate our browser failed, I swept my daughter off to the library. "This will be fun," I told her. Confronted by rows of nonfiction books, she did her own version of a hard-drive crash. "They're too long," she wailed. "I only need a page." Laziness was not the issue. Here was an A student, a voracious reader, raised in a home where computer time and TV watching have always been doled out. As the night wore on, I realized that she really did not know how to read or even skim a nonfiction book to distill key facts. Why would she have to, with succinct summaries of any topic imaginable a mouse click or two away? As a writer myself, I use Google every day, but I do worry about what we are giving up with all this speed and efficiency. As Carr so wisely notes, from the fuzziness of contemplation come some of our best ideas.

Julie Lake
Austin, Texas

Nicholas Carr correctly notes that technology is changing our lives and our brains. The average young person spends more than eight hours each day using technology (computers, PDAs, TV, videos), and much less time engaging in direct social contact. Our UCLA brain-scanning studies are showing that such repeated exposure to technology alters brain circuitry, and young developing brains (which usually have the greatest exposure) are the most vulnerable. Instead of the traditional generation gap, we are witnessing the beginning of a *brain gap* that separates *digital natives*, born into 24/7 technology, and *digital immigrants*, who came to computers and other digital technology as adults.

This perpetual exposure to technology is leading to the next major milestone in brain evolution. More than 300,000 years ago, our Neanderthal ancestors discovered handheld tools, which led to the co-evolution of language, goal-directed behavior, social networking, and accelerated development of the frontal lobe, which controls these functions. Today, video-game brain, Internet addiction, and other technology side effects appear to be suppressing frontal-lobe executive skills and our ability to communicate face-to-face. Instead, our brains are developing circuitry for online social networking and are adapting to a new multitasking technology culture.

Gary Small, M.D.
Director, UCLA Memory & Aging Research Center
Los Angeles, Calif.

MODERN MOGUL

What Mark Bowden fails to perceive ("Mr. Murdoch Goes to War," July/August *Atlantic*) is that the likes of Rupert Murdoch are actually taking us back to a more normal era of hucksterism (i.e., commercialism) in reporting. The period of white-collar journalism that *The Wall Street Journal* symbolized came at a price. The dominance of single newspapers in metropolitan areas, and the high polish of their college-educated reporters, led to a sense of disenfranchisement by the general public. Once the "Gray Ladies" of our world had their say, the substance of their reporting became newsworthy in itself, and the average man on the street became a distant observer.

Although *The Wall Street Journal* and other major subscriber-bleeders like *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* continue to hold the Internet at arm's length, their survival depends on embracing the Web. The only thing *The Journal* is firewalling by not allowing free access to its site is its own vanity, a much devalued asset.

Ralph Cohen
Seal Beach, Calif.

OPTING OUT?

Sandra Tsing Loh's critique of Linda Hirshman ("I Choose My Choice!," July/August *Atlantic*) fails to engage Hirshman's argument. Hirshman's concern is that women at elite institutions—who, like their male classmates, are in the best position to win an election or perform groundbreaking surgery—are turning down a historic opportunity for gender parity in favor of a relatively low-stress, enjoyable life. Although unquestionably an important fact about the world, it is largely beside Hirshman's point that many women struggle through cubicle jobs and that stocking shelves is not very rewarding. Yet this theme animates nearly the entirety of Tsing Loh's response.

As a white male lawyer educated at America's top schools, I would very much like to see my female classmates end up as politicians, tenured professors, and law-firm partners. A few will; many will not.

M. Ryan Calo
Washington, D.C.

Sandra Tsing Loh replies:
Actually, it is M. Ryan Calo who fails to engage my argument. My point is that Hirshman's focus on what Calo calls "gender parity" within the occupational elite causes her (and Calo) to ignore the wide and growing class disparities between the occupational elite, made up of men and women, and the rest of the country. Remember: 96.5 percent of women earn less than $75,000 a year. As I noted, Neil Gilbert, whose book I praised, sees the

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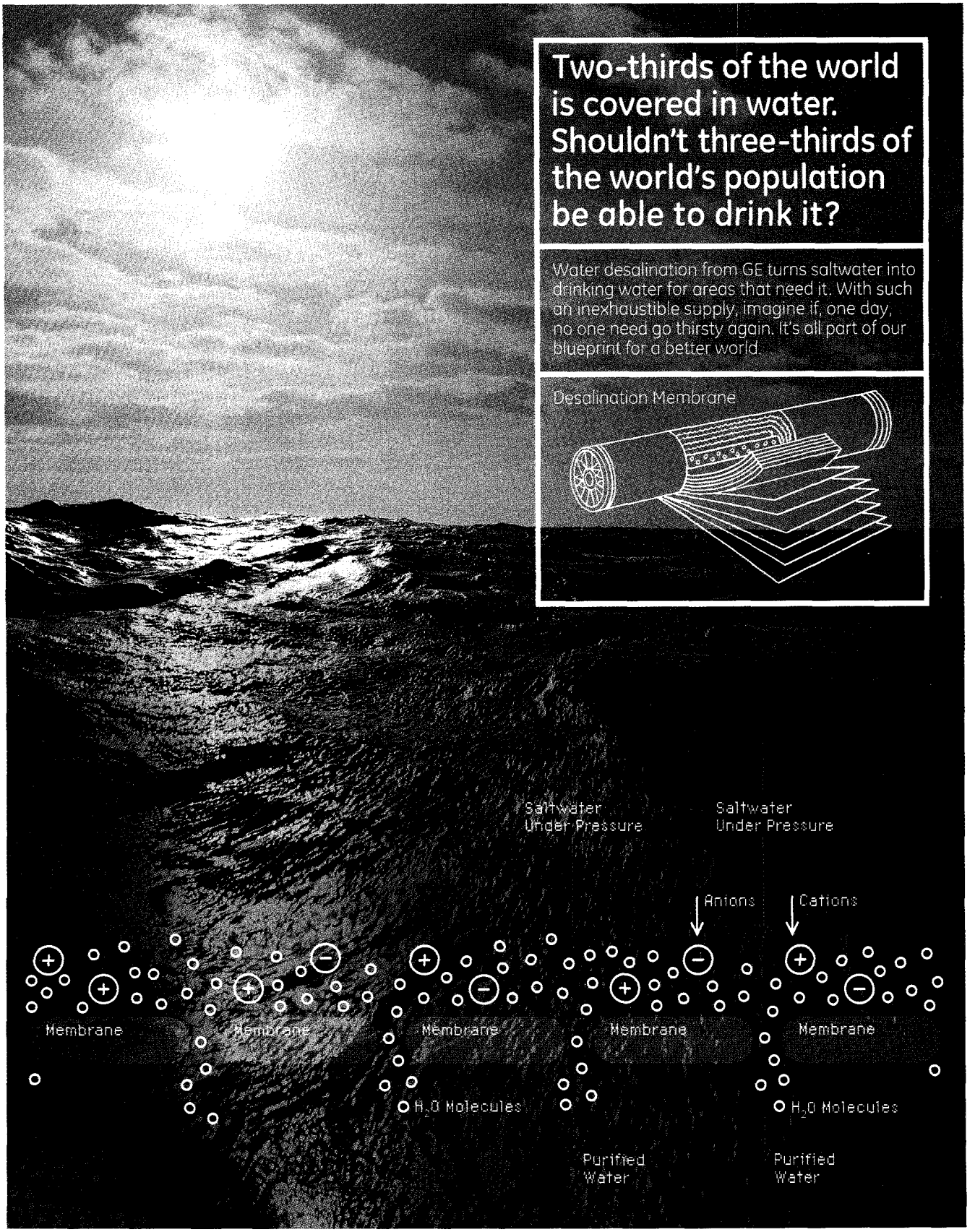

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occupational elite's ideology—in which equality between men and women supersedes equality between social classes—as "the triumph of feminism over socialism." Perhaps Calo should be less worried about the very small number of politicians, tenured professors, and law-firm partners of either gender and more worried about, say, the secretaries and office support staff (the vast majority of whom are women) who no doubt toil under his very nose. They may have a less rosy view of the fun, glamorous world of work than do he and Hirshman.

DEBATING CRIME

Hanna Rosin advances an untested thesis ("American Murder Mystery," July/August *Atlantic*)—that public-housing residents living in Memphis, Tennessee, are largely responsible for an increase in crime when they relocate to surrounding neighborhoods.

I am responsible for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's research on how HUD programs affect the people and places we're charged with helping, and I read Hanna Rosin's article not only because I have a keen interest in the subject matter but also because I was surprised no one at HUD had been contacted by *The Atlantic* in preparation of the story. Had Rosin made the effort to call, I would have been happy to share with her the body of research, both inside and outside HUD, that examines how deconcentrating poverty through the department's HOPE VI, Moving to Opportunity, and Housing Choice Voucher programs impacts crime.

HUD has implemented a number of regulations intended to both discourage resident crime and protect residents from being victimized. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld one such rule that permits local housing authorities to exercise a tough "one strike and you're out" policy, allowing for the quick eviction of tenants who engage in criminal activity. Public-housing residents and families receiving housing vouchers have average annual incomes of just $12,000. The housing assistance they receive is extremely important to them, and the threat of eviction is a strong disincentive to commit crime.

Neither the research Rosin cites, nor any other study that I am familiar with, directly links vouchers with crime. Quality research on the HOPE VI program finds that most public-housing residents who relocate with a voucher move into lower-poverty and safer neighborhoods. This research certainly points to how we can make our programs better, but on balance, the benefits outweigh the negatives. Which leads me to ask: What is Rosin ultimately suggesting? That decades of public policies and programs designed to deconcentrate poverty in America ought to be reversed in favor of those that would restore the high-poverty neighborhoods of our past? Should we just write off the poor? Sadly, the tone and tenor of Rosin's article appear designed to inflame the cynical fears of those who would seize on issues of race and class to fuel their bias.

Todd Richardson
Director, Program Evaluation Division, Office of Policy Development and Research
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Washington, D.C.

Hanna Rosin's article has been interpreted by many as a wholesale indictment of federally supported housing interventions. As researchers cited in the story, we wish to offer some additional insight, make clear that we unequivocally support these interventions, and suggest how we might do better.

Our research emphasizes shifts in the geographic distribution of poor and low-income people—many of which are driven by market forces—and the issues raised by geographic shifts in poverty. In Memphis and elsewhere, declines in the population of high-poverty neighborhoods corresponded with increases in the poverty population in formerly low-poverty neighborhoods. Poverty began to decentralize in Memphis between 1990 and 2000; neither HOPE VI redevelopment (most of which occurred after 2000) nor vouchers (which did not increase much until after 2000) materially affected what was happening during that time.

Our motivation was to identify neighborhoods under stress and work with community partners to design and implement interventions, not to model the effects of vouchers on crime. We do not know if low-income residents coming to new neighborhoods with vouchers or because of a HOPE VI relocation are more or less likely to be involved in street crime than other low-income residents. We do know that the well-documented relationship between poverty and street crime offers a basic takeaway lesson for policy makers: *neighborhoods experiencing increases in poverty are too often ignored until they reach a higher poverty threshold, crime-prevention strategies must be mobilized early, and promising antipoverty interventions must be taken to scale.*

Not mentioned in the article is one such promising intervention: Memphis HOPE, which supports intensive case management for families relocated from the last two public-housing–HOPE VI redevelopments. Outcomes to date for Memphis HOPE case management are encouraging. Less encouraging is the lack of resources to expand this support system.

We also know that crime-suppression efforts by the Memphis Police Department are being linked with supportive and longer-term preventive interventions through, for example, the Domestic Assault Response Team, and that this linkage is producing some remarkable results in high-crime neighborhoods with concentrations of at-risk multifamily housing. The more-typical *absence* of linkages means (at best) "benign neglect," which is even more likely when intervention programs are all back in the old neighborhoods. Housing authorities can help support neighborhoods *and* voucher holders by helping support these linkages. But first we have to understand how the debilitating conditions of public housing risk being re-created in newer and better-looking,

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but no less unhealthy, multifamily developments. You do not have to be a former resident of public housing to find yourself in a new "public-housing-like" environment.

In our view, it will take acknowledgement on the part of all stakeholders, and a concerted collaborative effort, to design and deliver strategies that can stabilize neighborhoods and promote economic mobility for the vast majority of poor families that are not included in the Memphis HOPE solution. That's what "going public" with the story was all about.

Phyllis Betts and
Richard Janikowski
The University of Memphis
Memphis, Tenn.

Hanna Rosin replies:

Since my story came out, I have received a barrage of complaints from housing activists and researchers questioning the link between voucher programs and crime. On the whole, I find that these complaints are overly focused on the minutiae and evade the big picture. First, I will say that I spoke to dozens of HUD-hired researchers in Memphis and around the country and read dozens of HUD reports; only a minority of the reports concern the effect of residents on the neighborhoods they move into.

Critics of the story like to say that the number of actual voucher holders is too small to actually affect crime patterns, and that there is no direct evidence linking voucher holders and crime. This is just a numbers game and does not tell the whole story. Many voucher holders are women with children; it's the people living with them who tend to commit crimes. It's perfectly possible, for example, that Section 8 residents are in fact the victims of crime. Many more people were displaced from public housing than received vouchers.

The relevant statistics in each city are: how many people lived in public housing at its height in the mid-1990s, and how many people are left there now. In Memphis, the number of people who relocated with vouchers is just under 1,000, but the number pushed out by the demolition of public housing and by other market forces is 40,000.

The real story is about the redistribution of the poor and how it was managed by cities. For that bigger picture, the link between relocation and crime patterns is overwhelming, and cities need to address it. As for the charge that I want to "write off the poor" or "inflame the cynical fears" of racists—I've heard it over and over, and it's a low blow. You cannot have really read my story and still believe that.

STOP AND GO

John Staddon writes ("Distracting Miss Daisy," July/August *Atlantic*) that according to Smeed's Law, traffic-fatality rates are a function of population density and the number of cars on the road, and little else. The consequence, explains Staddon, is that government can do little, through signage and traffic laws, to lower traffic-accident rates—a point summarized by the subhead "Why Safety Measures Don't Improve Safety." Yet Staddon goes on to argue that a more minimalist, European-style approach to traffic control, adopted here, would produce safer roads. What became of Smeed's Law?

Kurt Norlin
Irvine, Calif.

John Staddon is so caught up with traffic signs and highway designs that he misses one of the greatest differences between British and American highways. In America, everyone drives—so to speak. In Britain, this is not so. I bet there is not a high school in Britain that has problems creating parking spaces for students. In America, it is the first consideration when making plans for a new school.

The next time Staddon tootles round the U.K., he should keep an eye out for cars full of kids recklessly swerving from lane to lane as if in a video game. I bet a tankful of petrol he will see far fewer in the U.K. than in the U.S. They—more than signs and highway designs—contribute to the difference in fatalities per mile traveled.

Tom Morgan
Franklin, N.Y.

An article in *The Huntsville Times* (Alabama) crystallized for me just how dependent American drivers are on signage to direct their every action. One of our high-school correspondents, who received her license in January, recently wrote an article headlined "A Few $67 Signs May Prevent Some Wrecks." In it, she advocates adding to traffic lights a $67 sign that reads "Left Turn Yield on Green," claiming that, without such signs, "there could be a lot of confusion." That a young driver feels so dependent on signage to remind her of a standard traffic law confirms that we have gone over the top in the proliferation of signs.

John Hubbard
Huntsville, Ala.

John Staddon replies:

Kurt Norlin makes a point that I strove to clarify. The fact that Smeed's Law worked until the mid-'60s shows that drivers learn to cope with bad roads and heavy traffic. Over a long period, accident rates were therefore more or less independent of road conditions. The fact that Smeed's Law has worked less well in recent years is probably attributable to improvements in safety technology—chiefly seat belts, chassis design, and air bags—and has little to do with driver behavior. Smeed's Law shows that drivers learn from and adapt to the driving environment. But drivers may learn bad as well as good things if traffic laws reinforce behavior like looking for signs and cops and at the speedometer, which competes with attending to road conditions.

In the U.K., the Department for Transport lays out explicit standards for sign policy, emphasizing that signs be "used sparingly." But in the U.S., much discretion seems to be given to states and counties. Hence, signs and speed limits are added and altered in response to local politics and fears of litigation, with no thought to their collective effects.

There must be some reason for the huge disparity in accident rates between the U.K. and the U.S.: if we had the same fatality rates as those in the U.K., we'd see 6,000 or so fewer annual deaths, according to current statistics. Tom Morgan thinks it's

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because a smaller proportion of the population drives in the U.K. How then to account for the 50 percent decrease in U.K. fatalities over the past 30 years (versus 20 percent in the U.S. over the same period), while both the proportion and absolute number of U.K. drivers have increased?

RUMSFELD'S LEGACY

Robert Kaplan is almost totally wrong in painting over Donald Rumsfeld's wrong and wrongheaded Pentagon reign ("What Rumsfeld Got Right," July/August *Atlantic*). Two mammoth wrongs, we learn anew, don't make even half a right.

Kaplan is complicit in perpetuating the myth of "defense transformation" when he uncritically uses the term to characterize Pentagon activities and (non)thinking. "Transformation" is nothing but self-deceiving, self-serving Pentagon rhetoric intended to convince uninitiated audiences that sweeping overhaul, not mere incremental tweaking of the status quo, is under way.

Some examples of Kaplan's misjudgments, misrepresentations, and omissions:

He credits Rumsfeld with expanding special-operations forces. He doesn't address the strategic consequences of such expansion: heightened temptations for more unaccountable, extralegal covert interventions; further blurring of distinctions between military, intelligence, and police; secrecy-induced weakening of democratic civilian control of the military.

He credits Rumsfeld with expanding America's overseas bases into nontraditional geographical areas. He doesn't address how many of these bases are in countries run by sleazy, corrupt regimes whose "friendship" accentuates our hypocrisy and undermines our credibility.

He credits Rumsfeld with creating a Pentagon undersecretary for intelligence "to make relations with the civilian intelligence community more seamless." He doesn't address this enterprise's role in orchestrating "rogue" intelligence operations or providing "cooked" intelligence analyses to support policy preferences.

He mischaracterizes Rumsfeld's expanded use of contractors in Iraq as harmlessly intended to "create efficiencies in the rear." He doesn't question Rumsfeld's ulterior motives: circumventing tacit troop limits; avoiding accountability; funneling massive amounts of money to corporate political cronies and contributors.

The list goes on ... and on. Inexplicably, Kaplan mentions Abu Ghraib only as a passing afterthought, and Guantánamo not at all. Yet, considering that Rumsfeld reportedly endorsed, encouraged, or perhaps even directed the abuses at those two sites, they most signify his abysmal, strategically destructive performance. Finally, Kaplan totally ignores Rumsfeld's blatant politicization of the military's senior ranks, the potentially profound institutional consequences of which are yet to be realized.

Kaplan gets it most wrong when he says: "Rumsfeld was a first-class intellect, but a third-class temperament." Indeed, Rumsfeld displayed a third-class temperament. But, strategically speaking, he was a fourth-class intellect who may have done lasting damage to the United States. Curiously, his off-putting arrogance kept him from damaging the Pentagon as much as he did the country.

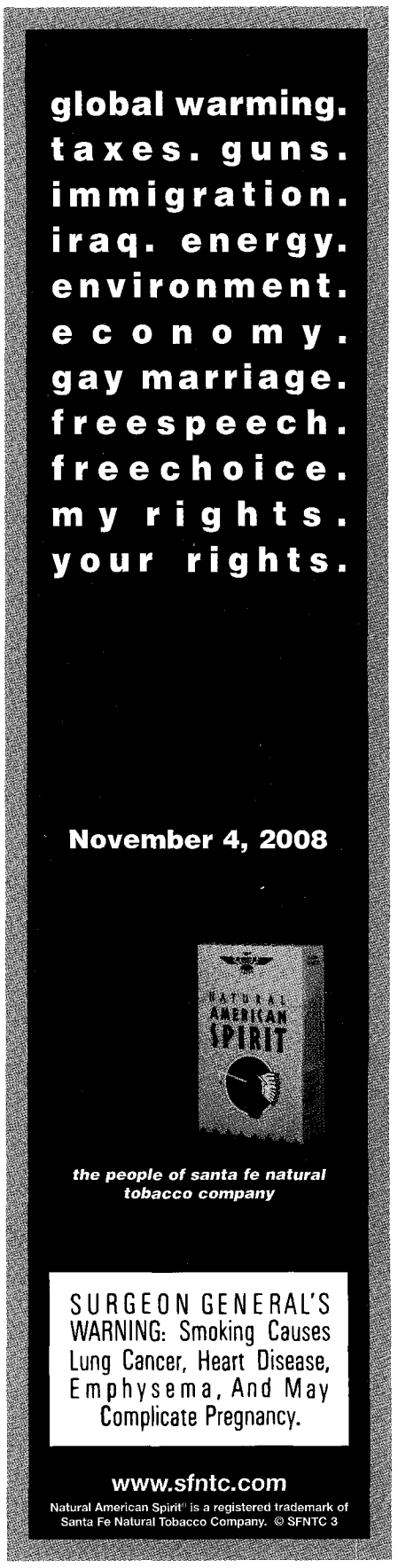
Gregory D. Foster
Professor, National Defense University
Washington, D.C.

ADVICE AND CONSENT

Cristina Nehring states that current French President Nicolas Sarkozy's approval ratings have "plummeted to the 30th percentile" ("Un Homme in Full," June *Atlantic*). Percentile is determined by an individual's standing within a comparison group. Being at the 30th percentile indicates one's value is higher than that of 30 percent of the others in the comparison group.

Glen Carson
Simpsonville, S.C.

Cristina Nehring replies:
Glen Carson is correct. I should have said Sarkozy's ratings plummeted to the 30 percent range.



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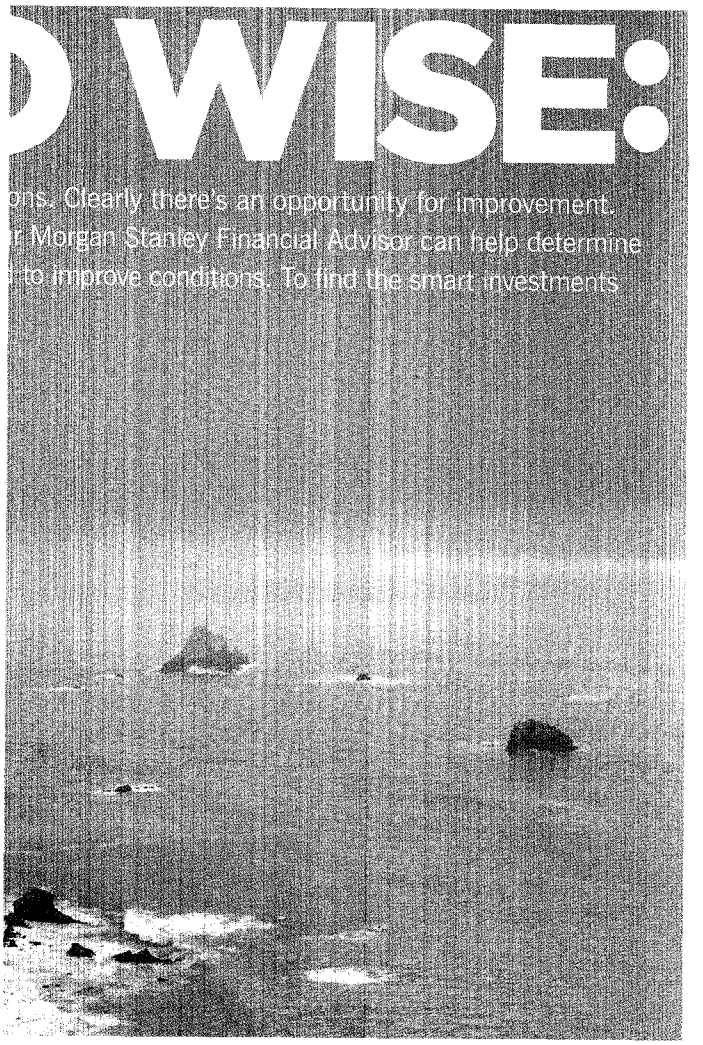

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THE AGENDA

BENJAMIN LOWY/VII NETWORK

COMMENT

Iraq-style counterinsurgency is fast becoming the U.S. Army's organizing principle. Is our military preparing to fight the next war, or the last one?

The Petraeus Doctrine

BY ANDREW J. BACEVICH

For a military accustomed to quick, easy victories, the trials and tribulations of the Iraq War have come as a rude awakening. To its credit, the officer corps has responded not with excuses but with introspection. One result, especially evident within the U.S. Army, has been the beginning of a Great Debate of sorts.

Anyone who cares about the Army's health should take considerable encouragement from this intellectual ferment. Yet anyone who cares about future U.S. national-security strategy should view the debate with considerable concern: it threatens to encroach upon matters that civilian policy makers, not soldiers, should decide.

What makes this debate noteworthy is not only its substance, but its character—the who and the how.

The military remains a hierarchical organization in which orders come from the top down. Yet as the officer corps grapples with its experience in Iraq, fresh ideas are coming from the bottom up. In today's Army, the most-creative thinkers are not generals but mid-career officers—lieutenant colonels and colonels.

Like any bureaucracy, today's military prefers to project a united front when dealing with the outside world, keeping internal dissent under wraps. Nonetheless, the Great Debate is unfolding in plain view in publications outside the Pentagon's purview, among them print magazines such as *Armed Forces Journal*,

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the Web-based *Small Wars Journal*, and the counterinsurgency blog Abu Muqawama.

The chief participants in this debate—all Iraq War veterans—fixate on two large questions. First, why, after its promising start, did Operation Iraqi Freedom go so badly wrong? Second, how should the hard-earned lessons of Iraq inform future policy? Hovering in the background of this Iraq-centered debate is another war that none of the debaters experienced personally—namely, Vietnam.

The protagonists fall into two camps: Crusaders and Conservatives.

The Crusaders consist of officers who see the Army's problems in Iraq as self-inflicted. According to members of this camp, things went awry because rigidly conventional senior commanders, determined "never again" to see the Army sucked into a Vietnam-like quagmire, had largely ignored unconventional warfare and were therefore prepared poorly for it. Typical of this generation is Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, once the top U.S. commander in Baghdad, who in late 2003 was still describing the brewing insurgency as "strategically and operationally insignificant," when the lowliest buck sergeant knew otherwise.

Younger officers critical of Sanchez are also committed to the slogan "Never again," but with a different twist: never again should the officer corps fall prey to the willful amnesia to which the Army succumbed after Vietnam, when it turned its back on that war.

Among the Crusaders' most influential members is Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl, a West Pointer and Rhodes Scholar with a doctorate from Oxford University. In 2002, he published a book, impeccably timed, titled *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam*. After serving in Iraq as a battalion operations officer, Nagl helped rewrite the Army's counterinsurgency manual and commanded the unit that prepares U.S. soldiers to train Iraqi security forces. (Earlier this year, he left the Army to accept a position with a Washington think tank.)

To Nagl, the lessons of the recent past are self-evident. The events of 9/11, he writes, "conclusively demonstrated that instability anywhere can be a real threat to the American people here at home." For the foreseeable future, political conditions abroad rather than specific military threats will pose the greatest danger to the United States.

Instability creates ungoverned spaces in which violent anti-American radicals thrive. Yet if instability anywhere poses a threat, then ensuring the existence of stability everywhere—denying terrorists sanctuary in rogue or failed states—becomes a national-security imperative. Define the problem in these terms, and winning battles becomes less urgent than pacifying populations and establishing effective governance.

> Nagl's aim is simply to prepare for the inescapable eventuality of one, two, many Iraqs to come.

War in this context implies not only coercion but also social engineering. As Nagl puts it, the security challenges of the 21st century will require the U.S. military "not just to dominate land operations, but to change entire societies."

Of course, back in the 1960s an earlier experiment in changing entire societies yielded unmitigated disaster—at least that's how the Army of the 1980s and 1990s chose to remember its Vietnam experience. Crusaders take another view, however. They insist that Vietnam could have been won—indeed was being won, after General Creighton Abrams succeeded General William Westmoreland in 1968 and jettisoned Westmoreland's heavy-handed search-and-destroy strategy, to concentrate instead on winning Vietnamese hearts and minds. Defeat did not result from military failure; rather, defeat came because the American people lacked patience, while American politicians lacked guts.

The Crusaders' perspective on Iraq tracks neatly with this revisionist take on Vietnam, with the hapless Sanchez (among others) standing in for Westmoreland, and General David Petraeus—whose Princeton doctoral dissertation was titled "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam"—as successor to General Abrams. Abrams's successful if tragically aborted campaign in Vietnam serves as a precursor to Petraeus's skillfully orchestrated "surge" in Iraq: each demonstrates that the United States can prevail in "stability operations" as long as commanders grasp the true nature of the problem and respond appropriately.

For Nagl, the imperative of the moment is to institutionalize the relevant lessons of Vietnam and Iraq, thereby enabling the Army, he writes, "to get better at building societies that can stand on their own." That means buying fewer tanks while spending more on language proficiency; curtailing the hours spent on marksmanship ranges while increasing those devoted to studying foreign cultures. It also implies changing the culture of the officer corps. An Army that since Vietnam has self-consciously cultivated a battle-oriented warrior ethos will instead emphasize, in Nagl's words, "the intellectual tools necessary to foster host-nation political and economic development."

Although the issue is by no means fully resolved, the evidence suggests that Nagl seems likely to get his way. Simply put, an officer corps that a decade ago took its intellectual cues from General Colin Powell now increasingly identifies itself with the views of General Petraeus. In the 1990s, the Powell Doctrine, with its emphasis on overwhelming force, assumed that future American wars would be brief, decisive, and infrequent. According to the emerging Petraeus Doctrine, the Army (like it or not) is entering an era in which armed conflict will be

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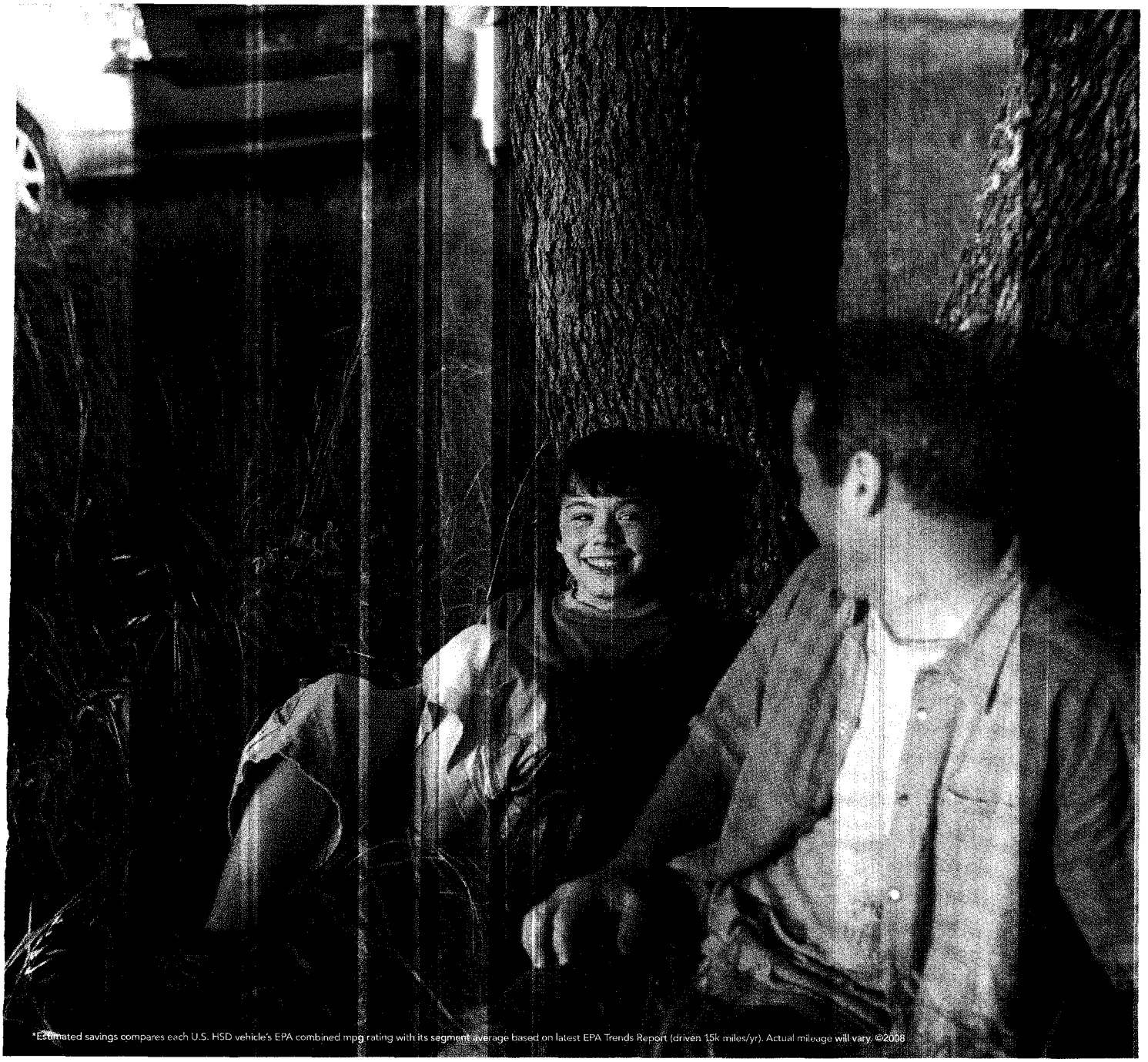

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protracted, ambiguous, and continuous—with the application of force becoming a lesser part of the soldier's repertoire.

Nagl's line of argument has not gone unchallenged. Its opponents, the Conservatives, reject the revisionist interpretation of Vietnam and dispute the freshly enshrined conventional narrative on Iraq. Above all, they question whether Iraq represents a harbinger of things to come.

A leading voice in the Conservative camp is Colonel Gian Gentile, a Berkeley graduate with a doctorate in history from Stanford, who currently teaches at West Point. Gentile has two tours in Iraq under his belt. During the second, just before the Petraeus era, he commanded a battalion in Baghdad.

Writing in the journal *World Affairs*, Gentile dismisses as "a self-serving fiction" the notion that Abrams in 1968 put the United States on the road to victory in Vietnam; the war, he says, was unwinnable, given the "perseverance, cohesion, indigenous support, and sheer determination of the other side, coupled with the absence of any of those things on the American side." Furthermore, according to Gentile, the post-Vietnam officer corps did not turn its back on that war in a fit of pique; it correctly assessed that the mechanized formations of the Warsaw Pact deserved greater attention than pajama-clad guerrillas in Southeast Asia.

Gentile also takes issue with the triumphal depiction of the Petraeus era, attributing security improvements achieved during Petraeus's tenure less to new techniques than to a "cash-for-cooperation" policy that put "nearly 100,000 Sunnis, many of them former insurgents, ... on the U.S. government payroll." According to Gentile, in Iraq as in Vietnam, tactics alone cannot explain the overall course of events.

All of this forms a backdrop to Gentile's core concern: that an infatuation with stability operations will lead the Army to reinvent itself as "a constabulary," adept perhaps at nation-building but shorn of adequate capacity for conventional war-fighting.

The concern is not idle. A recent article in *Army* magazine notes that the Army's National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California, long "renowned for its force-on-force conventional warfare maneuver training," has now "switched gears," focusing exclusively on counter-insurgency warfare. Rather than practicing how to attack the hill, its trainees now learn about "spending money instead of blood, and negotiating the cultural labyrinth through rapport and rapprochement."

The officer corps itself recognizes that conventional-warfare capabilities are already eroding. In a widely circulated white paper, three former brigade commanders declare that the Army's field-artillery branch—which plays a limited role in stability operations, but is crucial when there is serious fighting to be done—may soon be all but incapable of providing accurate and timely fire support. Field artillery, the authors write, has become a "dead branch walking."

Gentile does not doubt that counter-insurgencies will figure in the Army's future. Yet he questions Nagl's certainty that situations resembling Iraq should become an all-but-exclusive preoccupation. Historically, expectations that the next war will resemble the last one have seldom served the military well.

Embedded within this argument over military matters is a more fundamental and ideologically charged argument about basic policy. By calling for an Army configured mostly to wage stability operations, Nagl is effectively affirming the Long War as the organizing principle of post-9/11 national-security strategy, with U.S. forces called upon to bring light to those dark corners of the world where terrorists flourish. Observers differ on whether the Long War's underlying purpose is democratic transformation or imperial domination: Did the Bush administration invade Iraq to liberate that country or to control it? Yet there is no disputing that the Long War implies a vast military enterprise undertaken on a global scale and likely to last decades. In this sense, Nagl's reform agenda, if implemented, will serve to validate—and perpetuate—the course set by President Bush in the aftermath of 9/11.

Gentile understands this. Implicit in his critique of Nagl is a critique of the Bush administration, for which John Nagl serves as a proxy. Gentile's objection to what he calls Nagl's "breath-taking" assumption about "the efficacy of American military power to shape events" expresses a larger dissatisfaction with similar assumptions held by the senior officials who concocted the Iraq War in the first place. When Gentile charges Nagl with believing that there are "no limits to what American military power ... can accomplish," his real gripe is with the likes of Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz.

For officers like Nagl, the die appears to have been cast. The Long War gives the Army its marching orders. Nagl's aim is simply to prepare for the inescapable eventuality of one, two, many Iraqs to come.

Gentile resists the notion that the Army's (and by extension, the nation's) fate is unalterably predetermined. Strategic choice—to include the choice of abandoning the Long War in favor of a different course—should remain a possibility. The effect of Nagl's military reforms, Gentile believes, will be to reduce or preclude that possibility, allowing questions of the second order (How should we organize our Army?) to crowd out those of the first (What should be our Army's purpose?).

The biggest question of all, Gentile writes, is "Who gets to decide this?" Absent a comparably searching Great Debate among the civilians vying to direct U.S. policy—and the prospects that either Senator McCain or Senator Obama will advocate alternatives to the Long War appear slight—the power of decision may well devolve by default upon soldiers. Gentile insists—rightly—that the choice should not be the Army's to make.

Andrew J. Bacevich is a professor of history and international relations at Boston University. His new book, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*, was published in August.

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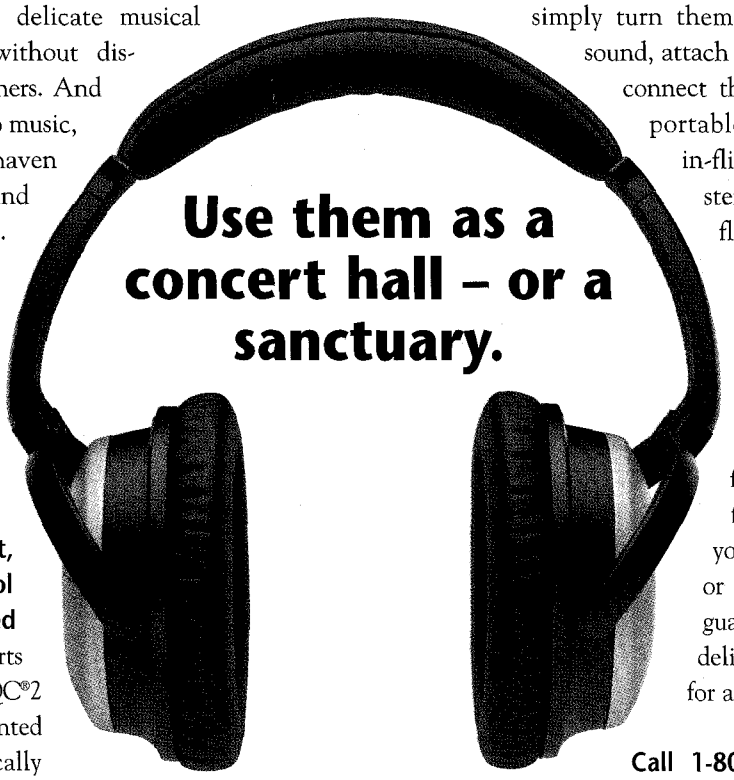

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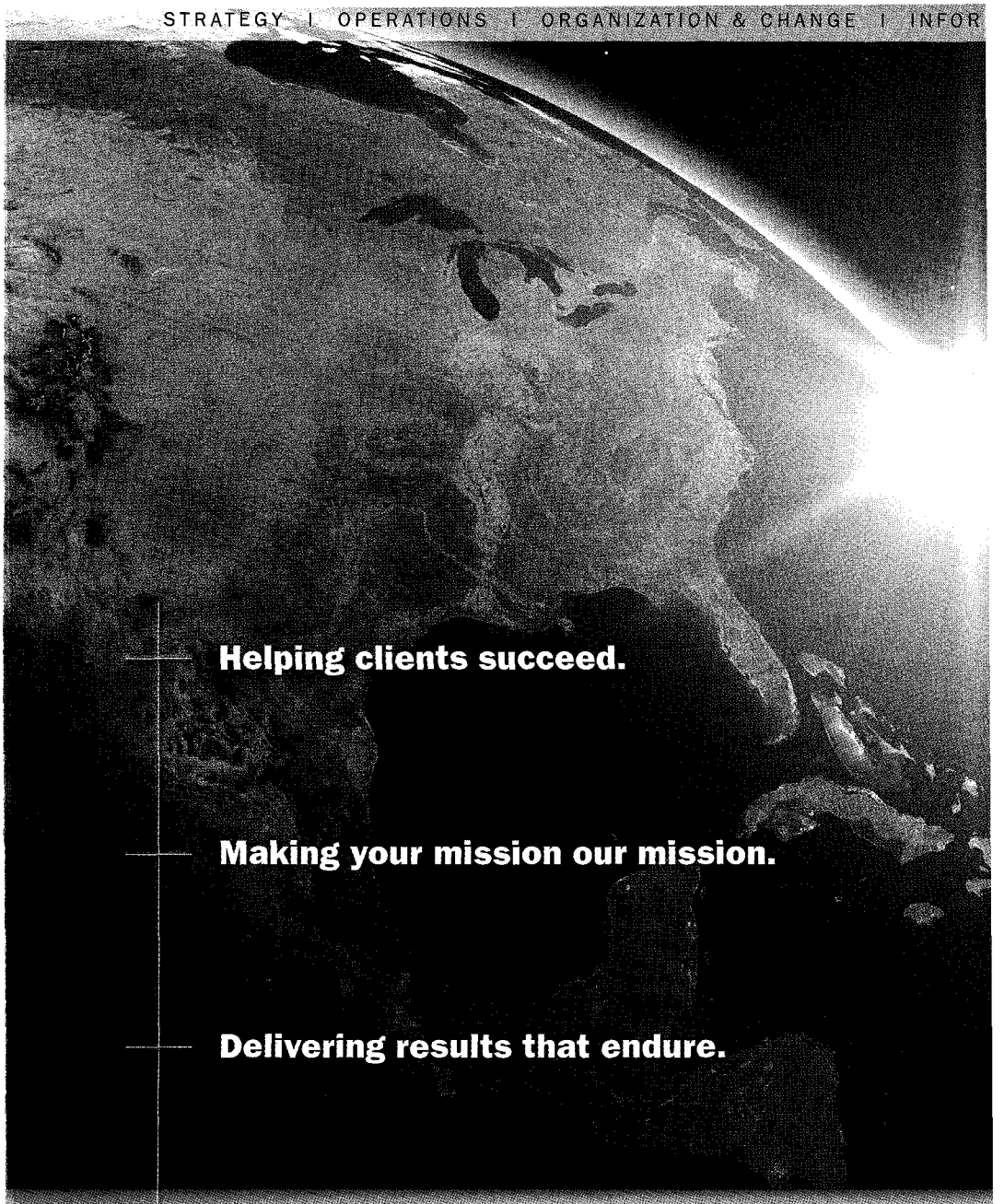

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Calendar

What to watch for in the weeks ahead

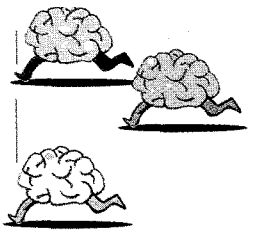
COMPILED BY MATTHEW QUIRK

OCT **1** **Hair Today ...**

English civil- and family-court judges will ditch the more-than-300-year-old tradition of horsehair wigs and don updated robes (think *Star Trek*) today. Criminal judges chose to keep the curls, which provide dignity and a modicum of disguise when facing down criminals.

OCT **1** **Remote Control**

The newest U.S. military command, AFRICOM, begins operations today—in Stuttgart, Germany. Africa had been split among other commands, but humanitarian concerns and antiterrorist operations warranted the upgrade. Not everyone is thrilled. Wary of U.S. intentions, no African country has yet agreed to host the command.



OCT **3–18** **Mind Games**

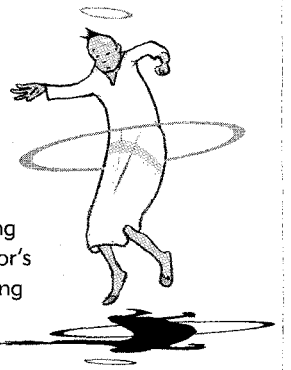
Brains, not brawn, will predominate at the first World Mind Sports Games, in Beijing, as 3,000 competitors from 150 countries vie for gold in chess, bridge, checkers, go, and *xiangqi* (Chinese chess). As in other sports, some participants will be drug-tested. Players hope one day to be included in the Olympic Games.

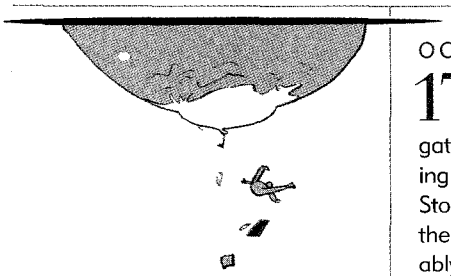
OCT **11** **A Big Stick**

The International Monetary Fund faces a tough sell as it tries to persuade sovereign wealth funds—foreign-government-run investment vehicles that now control $2 to $3 trillion—to accept new guidelines by today that would keep the funds from being used as political tools.

OCT **12** **The Holy (Wait and) See**

Pope Benedict XVI elevates four Catholics to sainthood today, but the crowd favorites—John Paul II and Mother Teresa—will have to wait. Benedict has restored rigor to the process, easing his predecessor's record-breaking pace of canonization.





OCT **17** **Another Bush Campaign**

Attention-seeking political films may be an election-year cliché, but that won't stop Lionsgate, distributor of *Fahrenheit 9/11* in 2004, from releasing Oliver Stone's controversial Bush biopic, W., today. Stone has suggested that even Bushies will appreciate the movie's candor; early peeks suggest that they probably won't.

OCT **29** **Nimrod Expedition**

One hundred years to the day after Ernest Shackleton led an ill-fated mission to the South Pole aboard the *Nimrod*—turning back within 100 miles of the pole, and nearly starving to death—descendants of the original team embark on an identical mission, hoping to make it to the pole.

OCT **31** **Now Departing**

Tempelhof, the airport made famous during the Berlin airlift and originally intended to function as the gateway to Hitler's Third Reich capital, "Germania," is slated to close today, the victim of Berlin's airport consolidation.

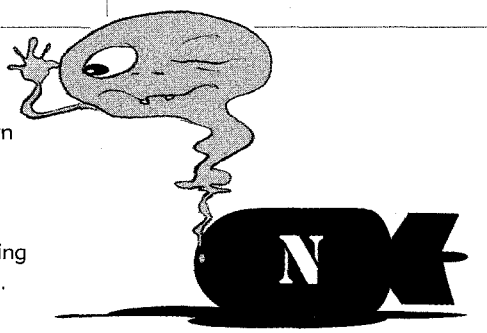
ALSO IN OCTOBER:

Nano Tech

Tata Motors of India rolls out the diminutive Nano this month. At about $2,500, the world's cheapest car could expand mass motorization—and create an environmental nightmare.

OCT **31** **Fission Quest**

North Korea has agreed to shut down its main nuclear facilities at Yongbyon by today, the first step in the tricky business of accounting for and monitoring the regime's nuclear secrets.



ISTVAN BANYAI

Hidden Incentives

America's spies had better shape up. This month, a new grading system takes effect across all 16 spy agencies for use in determining merit pay. The old tenure-based system wasn't attracting hotshot young spooks.

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PRIMARY SOURCES

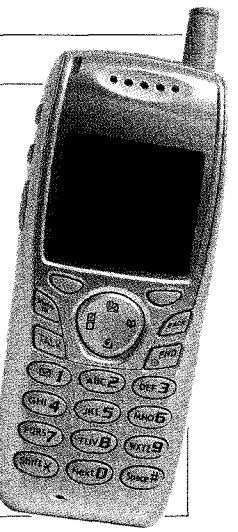
ECONOMICS

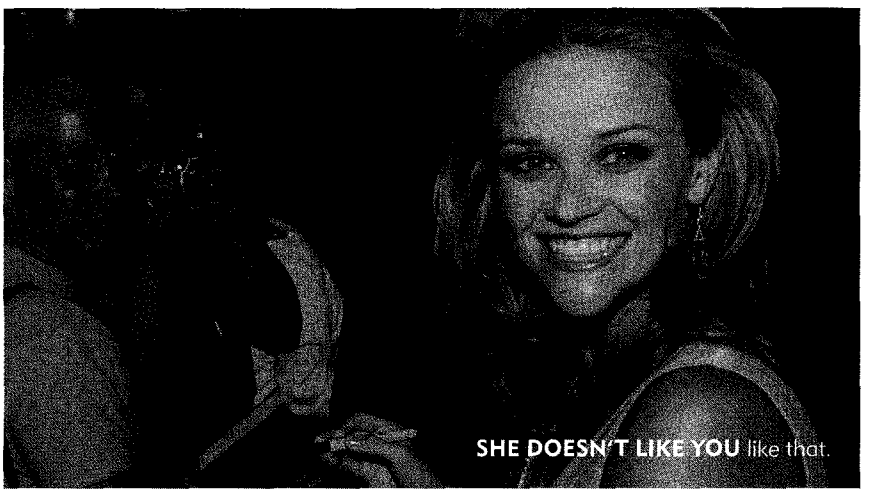
The Lesser Evil

Tobacco already kills 5.4 million people a year, and the number of smokers is likely to skyrocket as the vice catches on in developing countries. So how to prevent a plague of cancer deaths? You could spend $500 million on an antismoking campaign, as Bill Gates and Michael Bloomberg propose, or you could sign up everyone for cell-phone service. Two World Bank economists studied 2,400 households in the Philippines between 2003 and 2006, just as cell phones caught on (the percentage of households owning a mobile more than quadrupled). They found that in houses with at least one smoker, a mobile-phone purchase led to a 32.6 percent drop in tobacco consumption for each adult—the equivalent of an entire pack each month. They conclude that tobacco and mobile phones have a special relationship: cash-constrained households have to make a trade-off between the two luxuries, and the social status once signaled by burning up your money on smokes can now be conferred by yapping away on a flashy new phone.

—"So You Want to Quit Smoking: Have You Tried a Mobile Phone?" Julien Labonne and Robert S. Chase, World Bank

POOR MAN'S
Nicorette





CULTURE

Star Attraction

When Michael Jackson was cleared of child-molestation charges in 2005, hundreds of loyal fans cheered him on outside the courthouse, confetti littered the pavement, and one woman even released doves to celebrate. Such behavior might seem strange, but a study by three psychologists finds that celebrity devotion could be an ego boost—for celebrity and fan alike. Previous studies have shown that personal relationships with others can reinforce one's well-being and self-image. The authors investigated whether the same could be said of "parasocial" relationships—the one-sided bonds fans establish with celebrities in glossy magazines or on TV. They were especially interested in the effect on people with low self-esteem, who tend to be less comfortable in real relationships. The authors asked participants to write an essay about their favorite celebrity, and to fill out a questionnaire about how they perceived their "actual self" and "ideal self." They found that subjects with low self-esteem felt more like their ideal selves after writing about their favorite stars, and that they felt closest to celebrities who resembled their idealized self-image. The authors conclude that for people with poor self-esteem, quasi-relationships with celebrities can provide benefits similar to those of real relationships. But before you cancel your Match.com subscription in favor of *Us Weekly*, the authors warn that while parasocial relationships are better than no relationships at all, they're "best considered as complementary" to the real thing.

—"Parasocial Relationships and Self-Discrepancies: Faux Relationships Have Benefits for Low-Self-Esteem Individuals," Jaye L. Derrick, Shira Gabriel, and Brooke Tippin, Personal Relationships

SOCIETY

Mixed Up

When Barack Obama admitted that he had tried liquor, pot, and "a little blow" in his younger days, he was describing the experience of many mixed-race youths: a new study finds that children of black-white interracial unions are far more likely to engage in risky behavior than their peers of a single race. The authors analyzed a national survey that gathered data on children in grades 7–12 and asked them about risky behavior like drinking, fighting, stealing, and doing drugs. While mixed-race children scored between whites and blacks on levels of school achievement, the authors say they found "high rates of risky/anti-social behavior on the part of mixed race adolescents on virtually every dimension we are able to measure." Mixed-race kids scored worse than both blacks and whites in more than 70 percent of the measured behaviors, and they showed worse results whether the bad behavior was more common among whites (like drinking and smoking) or among blacks (like violence and riskier sexual practices). The authors suspect that such kids, burdened by dual loyalties to often-conflicting groups, go to extremes to demonstrate solidarity with their peers through "group-sanctioned misbehavior."

—"The Plight of Mixed Race Adolescents," Roland G. Fryer Jr., Lisa Kahn, Steven D. Levitt, Jörg L. Spenkuch, National Bureau of Economic Research

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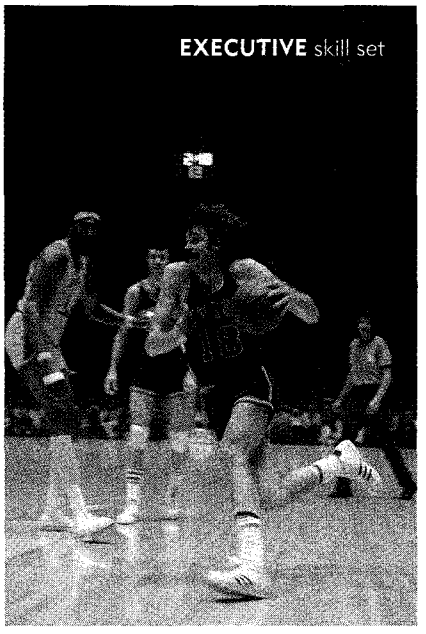


SPORTS

Ballers, Shot-Callers

Phil Jackson, coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, has the highest winning percentage in NBA history. Jackson's players credit his success to a Zen-like calm under pressure, but a new study on leadership abilities suggests another factor: his years as an NBA player, even though much of his career was spent bench-warming. The authors calculated NBA coaches' winning percentages between 1996 and 2004 over 15,000 regular-season games. They found that coaches who had spent some time as a player got far better results out of their teams than those who hadn't. And, Jackson aside, the authors found that former all-stars tended to be better coaches than non-all-stars. On average, teams with former all-stars as coaches placed six spots higher in league rankings than teams with coaches who had never played in the NBA, a huge bump-up in a league with only 29 total teams during the years studied. The authors say these findings apply more broadly: leadership skills tend to derive from expert knowledge of a given trade, not from some mysterious alchemy of natural intelligence and interpersonal skills. They suspect that their findings will apply to other "high-performance workplaces where the employees are experts"—even if the "experts" aren't averaging $5 million a year.

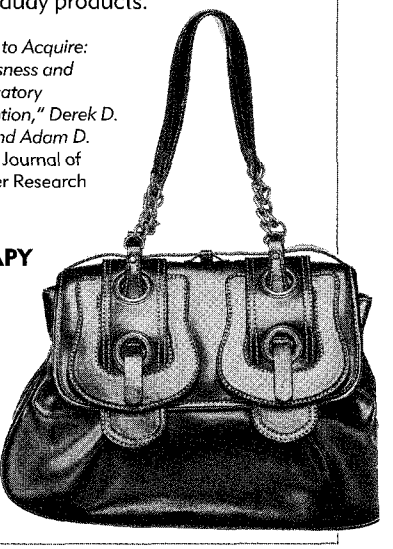
—"Why Do Leaders Matter? The Role of Expert Knowledge," Amanda H. Goodall, Lawrence M. Kahn, Andrew J. Oswald, Cornell University ILR School, Warwick University, and Warwick Business School

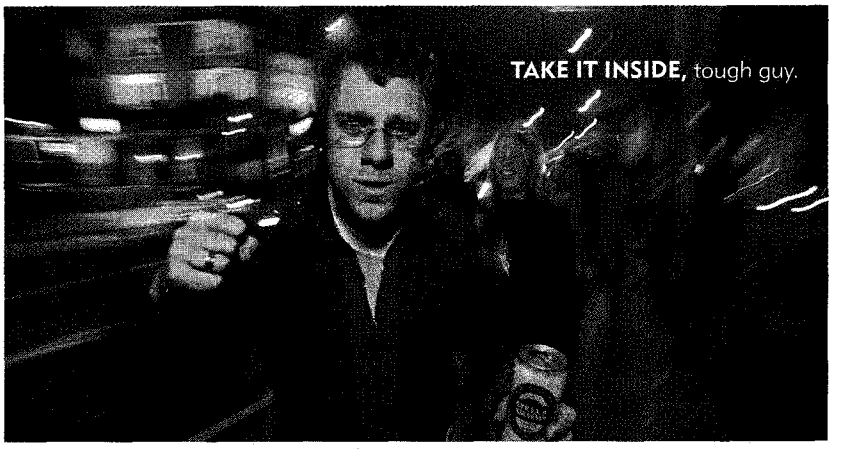
PSYCHOLOGY

Power Premium

Suppose you have crushing credit-card debt, a demanding tyrant for a boss, and disobedient children. According to a new study, you're probably also a sucker who'd be willing to pay more for luxury goods than someone who's on top of the world. The authors asked a group of college students to dwell on a situation in which someone had power over them. They found that this group was willing to pay much more for high-status items like a briefcase and a silk tie than another group that had just gleefully meditated on a situation in which they were in control. Both groups, however, were equally willing to pay for low-status items like a ballpoint pen, a clothes dryer, and a minivan. The researchers say that people who lack power tend to compensate by improving their status, and because one way to do so is by flaunting expensive goods, they suggest the powerless will shell out more cash than the empowered for the same gaudy products.

—"Desire to Acquire: Powerlessness and Compensatory Consumption," Derek D. Rucker and Adam D. Galinsky, Journal of Consumer Research





CRIME

Punch Drunks

How do you like your booze: to stay or to go? Whether residents of a given neighborhood prefer patronizing bars or liquor stores to get smashed has a significant impact on patterns of violent crime and disorderly conduct, a study by the Urban Institute finds. The researchers mapped 1,473 alcohol-selling establishments in the District of Columbia, and then tracked the relationship between the type of outlet and "violence and disorder," using measures like arrests and 911 calls. Not surprisingly, the more establishments selling spirits in a neighborhood, the more general mayhem occurs. But neighborhoods with a lot of outlets offering liquor to go (like corner stores) tend to experience more domestic violence, while neighborhoods with a high number of sites that let customers drink on the premises (like bars and restaurants) tend to have many more reports of aggravated assault. Although pubs are "attractors of violence" generally, the study shows that bar districts see considerably fewer reports of domestic violence, suggesting that drinkers may be taking their anger out on the loudmouth on the next bar stool—rather than in the home.

—"Alcohol Outlets as Attractors of Violence and Disorder: A Closer Look at the Neighborhood Environment," Caterina Gouvis Roman, Shannon E. Reid, Avinash S. Bhati, Bogdan Tereshchenko, Urban Institute

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: WEN ROBERTS/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES; IAN NOLAN/ALAMY; BARRY LEWIS/CORBIS

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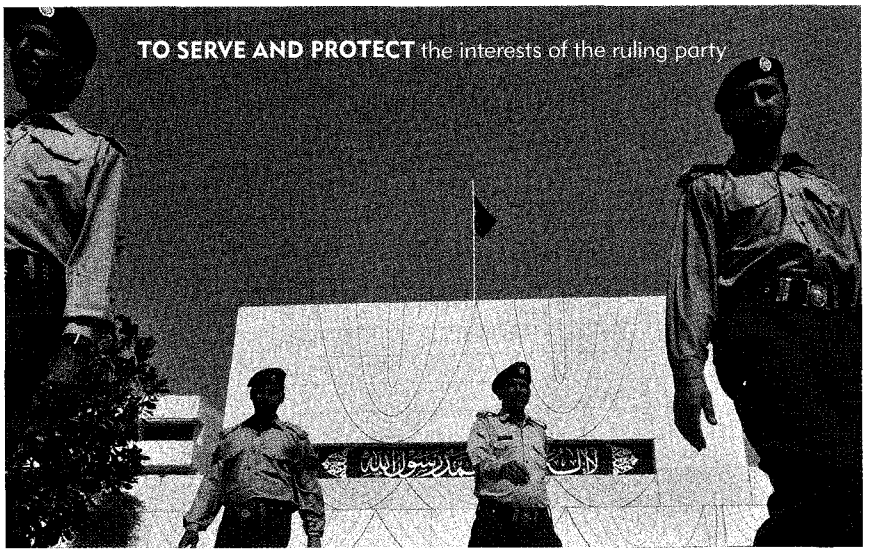
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Islamabad's Finest

As Pakistan confronts a growing threat of homegrown terrorism, it will need to completely overhaul its "brutal and corrupt" police force, a new study argues. Pakistan's police are completely inept at enforcing the law and protecting the citizenry, and they're so underpaid that officers are routinely seen hitchhiking to their stations. The force is also crippled by corruption and often used by the country's rulers to quell dissent and harass political opposition. Pakistan's military regime even used police agencies to rig the polls in elections earlier this year. As one police officer told the authors, "So long as the ruler of the day treats the police as his personal militia, *the police can never be reformed.*" More ominously, the report warns that jihadists have infiltrated the police ranks, and that the government has done little to root them out. Hundreds of Pakistanis have been killed in terrorist attacks in the past year, including former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, but while the U.S. has doled out more than $10 billion in counterterrorism aid to Pakistan, nearly all of it has gone to the military—largely for expensive weapons at the Indian front—and not to the police. "When the state itself has consciously promoted *extremism and sectarianism for almost* three decades," one official told the authors, "it's not surprising that these tendencies have managed to establish roots inside the police force."

—*"Reforming Pakistan's Police," International Crisis Group*



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DEFENSE

The Bourne Insomnia

Will the wars of the future be won by hyperaggressive super-soldiers with electrodes grafted onto their brains? Not likely, a report commissioned by the Pentagon concludes—but sleepless armies might have a huge advantage on tomorrow's battlefields. The authors studied the outer reaches of the field of "human performance modification"—including brain-computer interfaces, neuro-pharmaceuticals, and "brain plasticity"—in search of advances that may have military applications. And they found that high-tech ways to ameliorate the effects of sleep deprivation may prove most useful in future conflicts. Old-fashioned fatigue is still a major liability for the military: soldiers commonly use supplements to shake off exhaustion, and the report estimates that an army of men who could sleep less than two hours a night without side effects would cut casualties in half and would be as effective as 40 percent more troops. The authors recommend enhanced research into "neuromodulators" like ampakines that might help improve cognition in the sleep-deprived. But beyond that, the truly exotic human modifications they considered yielded few practical possibilities. Although brain-computer interfaces are helpful in treating injuries and strokes, for instance, they can't bring function back to normal levels and aren't promising for supercharging healthy soldiers. Alarmingly, though, the authors note that research on remote-controlling future soldiers, or stoking their aggression by implanting electrodes in their brains, looks promising in rats.

—*"Human Performance," E. Williams et al., Mitre Corporation*

READING, WRITING, and engendering private-sector competition

BETH ROONEY/WPN

EDUCATION

The Catholic Edge

"The first duty of every Catholic father to the public school is to keep his children out of it," an old Church dictum held. Catholic parents who heeded that advice may have been doing the state a favor: a new study finds that international Catholic resistance to government-mandated schooling in the 19th century has resulted in higher student performance today—for Catholics and non-Catholics alike. The Catholic hierarchy historically encouraged the development of parochial schools to ensure the moral and religious training of Catholic children. As a result, scholars recently found, countries that had a higher percentage of Catholics in 1900 now have a greater overall number of private schools. Using an international student-assessment survey, and controlling for demographic factors, the authors calculated that countries with more private schools due to a "larger historical Catholic share" in the population did substantially better on achievement tests in all three subjects measured— math, science, and reading—while spending significantly less money per student. The authors argue that Catholic "opposition to state education in many contexts engendered private school competition that ultimately spurred student achievement."

—*"'Every Catholic Child in a Catholic School': Historical Resistance to State Schooling, Contemporary Private Competition, and Student Achievement Across Countries," Martin R. West and Ludger Wössmann, CESifo*

For links to the documents discussed in this section, visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200810/primarysources.

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THE NATION IN NUMBERS

Is wind the new ethanol?

Blowback

BY MATTHEW QUIRK

These are boom times for wind power. T. Boone Pickens, the wildcatter turned oil baron, is building the world's biggest wind farm, in the dry scrub of the Texas Panhandle—a $10 billion bet on wind's future. Twenty-eight states have set ambitious mandates for renewable energy, with wind power shouldering most of the load; many compel electric utilities to get at least 20 percent of their supply from wind and other renewable sources between 2015 and 2025.

Those requirements, along with a generous federal subsidy (20 percent of wind energy's costs), have fostered a turbine-building frenzy. Overall capacity grew by 45 percent last year alone. Several wind-power companies have been snapped up in recent years in a string of multibillion-dollar deals. In May, Jim Cramer talked up wind stocks on *Mad Money* while assembling a model turbine in the studio.

And why not? Wind power seems to promise zero emissions and an endless supply of cheap power.

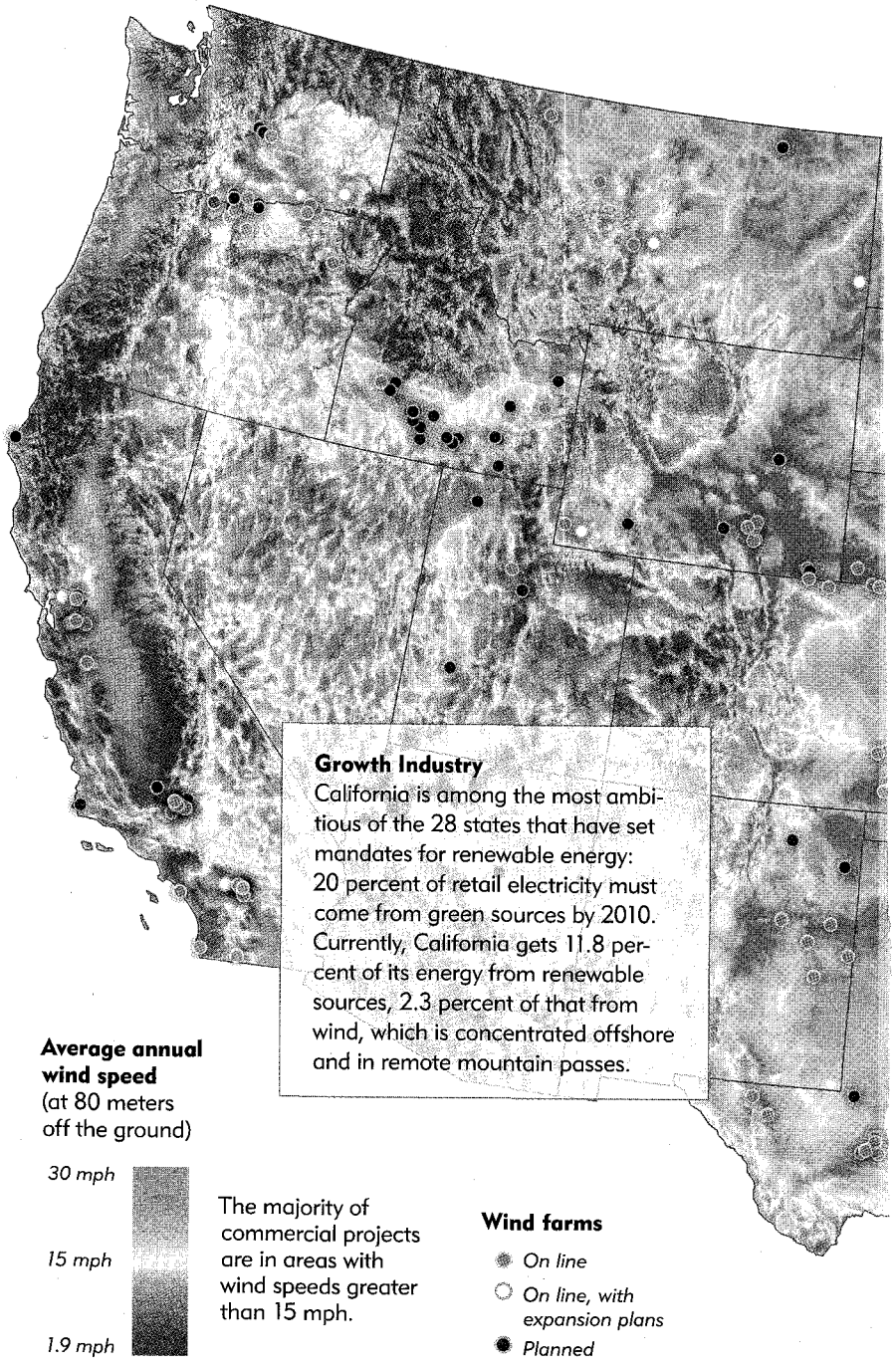
Still, it's hard to ignore the parallels to the recent ethanol boom, which was also fueled by mandates and subsidies, and which is now viewed almost universally as a disaster. Wind power is unlikely to cause a global food crisis. But heedless investment in it may provoke blowback of a different sort.

Though wind advocates say that we can reliably and economically use wind for 20 percent of our power needs, the experience of Texas, which leads the nation in wind power—2.9 percent of its electricity comes from wind—highlights two big problems: transmission and variability.

Pickens's windmills (like most of Texas's) will be in the west, where the wind blows the most. The big cities are in the east. This problem plagues wind power nationally: people typically don't live where the wind blows hardest, so you have to send power from, say, upstate to downstate New York, or from the Dakotas to the cities of the Midwest.

Texas expects to max out its east-west transmission lines by the end of the year. More wind power means new transmission lines, which will cost between $3 billion and $6.4 billion. Accommodating wind power on the scale foreseen nationally may require 12,000 to 19,000 miles of new high-power lines crisscrossing the country (by way of comparison, the interstate highway system runs 46,837 miles), plunging large parts of America into NIMBY hell.

Wind variability presents a more fundamental problem. Texas's experience, at less than 3 percent wind power, is again instructive. In February, an unexpected cold front calmed the state's wind farms. As power ran out and backup generation proved inadequate, grid operators were forced to call on large industrial and commercial users to power down.



SOURCES: WIND-FARM DATA PROVIDED BY PLATTS; MEDIAN WIND-SPEED DATA AND IMAGE PROVIDED BY AWS TRUEWIND; MAP BY RYAN MORRIS

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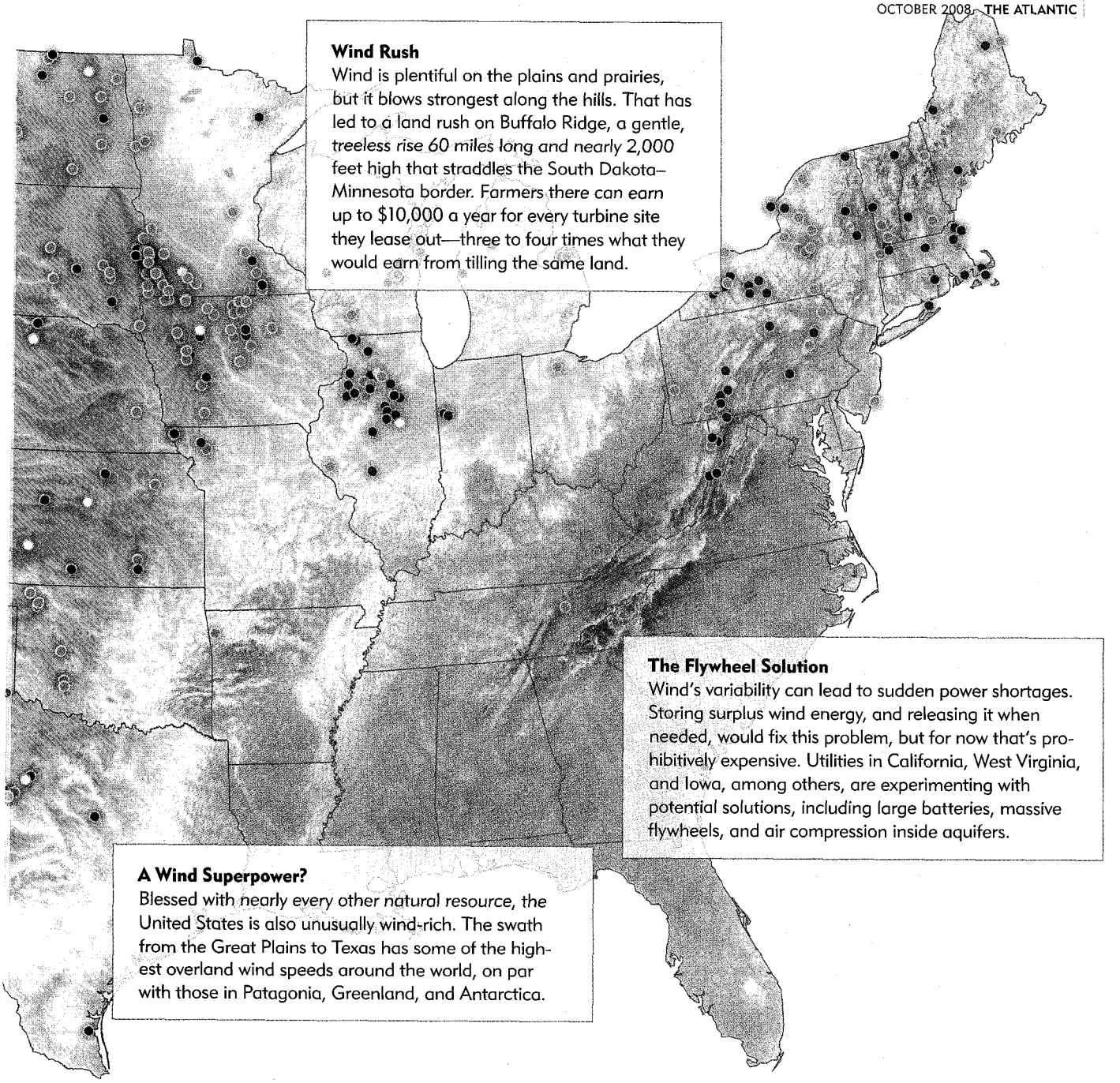

Wind Rush
Wind is plentiful on the plains and prairies, but it blows strongest along the hills. That has led to a land rush on Buffalo Ridge, a gentle, treeless rise 60 miles long and nearly 2,000 feet high that straddles the South Dakota–Minnesota border. Farmers there can earn up to $10,000 a year for every turbine site they lease out—three to four times what they would earn from tilling the same land.

The Flywheel Solution
Wind's variability can lead to sudden power shortages. Storing surplus wind energy, and releasing it when needed, would fix this problem, but for now that's prohibitively expensive. Utilities in California, West Virginia, and Iowa, among others, are experimenting with potential solutions, including large batteries, massive flywheels, and air compression inside aquifers.

A Wind Superpower?
Blessed with nearly every other natural resource, the United States is also unusually wind-rich. The swath from the Great Plains to Texas has some of the highest overland wind speeds around the world, on par with those in Patagonia, Greenland, and Antarctica.

Wind farms tend to produce the most energy when it's not needed—at night and in the spring and fall, when demand is low. The hottest, highest-demand days of the year are the days when wind's contribution is likely to be near zero. So wind, if it is to meet demand reliably, must be backed up, typically by (emissions-spewing) natural-gas plants that can ramp up and down quickly.

Powering plants up and down is inefficient, and when backup power is included, wind energy costs 10 to 30 percent more than fossil-fuel energy, even without factoring in the cost of new power lines. (Wind-energy costs have risen, not fallen, in recent years.) And once you include backup power, the cost of averting carbon-dioxide emissions by building a wind plant rises to $67 a ton, according to Cambridge Energy Research Associates. Less sexy emissions-reduction strategies, such as increasing efficiency at current electrical plants, cost between $10 and $30 a ton.

Wind is indisputably a promising source of renewable energy—today, in fact, it looks like the most promising and practical source. But many kinks remain to be worked out. It would be a tragedy if wind power were killed in the cradle by overeager requirements that bring hidden costs, unreliable operations, and higher energy prices, inviting a backlash.

The way to address our greenhouse-gas problems is not to champion wind or any other "silver bullet." It's to pass a national carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system, and let the market find the most efficient way to cut emissions and reduce our dependence on oil.

Matthew Quirk is an *Atlantic* staff editor.

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REPORT

Can Republicans find a way to compete on the Web?

Planting the Rightroots

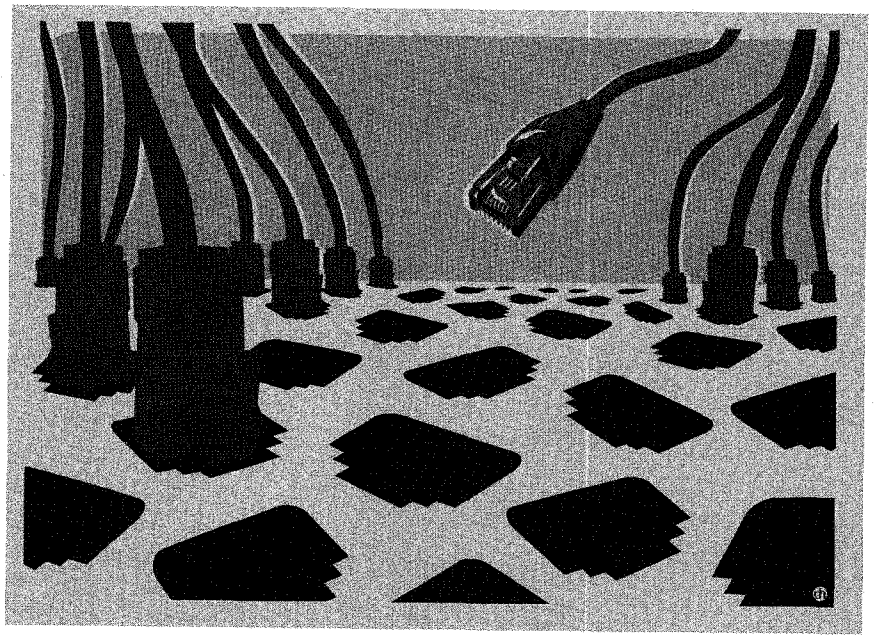
BY REIHAN SALAM

In a much-ridiculed speech at the 1996 Republican National Convention, Newt Gingrich hailed beach volleyball as the embodiment of all that makes America great. "A mere 40 years ago, beach volleyball was just beginning," Gingrich told the puzzled crowd. "No bureaucrat would have invented it, and that's what freedom is all about."

It seemed absurd to celebrate barefoot countercultural rebellion at a gathering of suit-and-tie-wearing Republicans. But Gingrich was on to something. He understood that Reaganism had triumphed in part because it was identified with Silicon Valley techno-optimism, the garish excesses of Sunbelt prosperity, and the zany creativity that gave rise to beach volleyball. The image of the GOP as the party of an expansive, innovative future represents at least one reason why Americans who came of age during the Reagan era are the most Republican slice of the population.

The fact that Gingrich's '96 speech met with such puzzlement now looks like a warning sign to the GOP. A decade later, the inventive spirit behind a new spate of American innovations, from Google to YouTube to Facebook, is almost exclusively associated with the liberal left. From Web-based political communities like MoveOn.org to new-media powerhouses like The Huffington Post and the wildly successful online fund-raising outfit ActBlue, Internet politics and liberal politics increasingly look like one and the same.

A generation ago, it was Republicans who dominated the landscape of mass communications, with their mastery of the 30-second television spot and their innovative use of direct mail to fund-raise and organize. As recently as 2004, it seemed as though conservatives still matched up about evenly in emerging communications technologies. The initial wave of high-traffic political sites tended to skew right, with forums like Free Republic.com and blogs like Instapundit and Power Line, which *Time* named Blog of the Year after it was credited with helping bring down Dan Rather over the fraudulent memos related to George W. Bush's National Guard service.



DANIEL HERTZBERG

But conservatives were fighting the last war. The Bush reelection campaign actually prefigured the Obama campaign's success in online organizing, but most movement conservatives used the Web the way they'd used talk radio: as a vehicle for argument and analysis, a right-wing alternative to the hated Mainstream Media. Meanwhile liberals, smarting from a string of political defeats, realized the medium's real potential—as a vehicle for organizing and fund-raising, a 21st-century answer to direct mail.

Direct mail was pioneered by George McGovern's Democratic presidential campaign in 1972, but it was perfected by conservative activist Richard A. Viguerie as a means of bypassing the mainstream media to mobilize the right—all while raising tidy sums for Republican candidates. (In the 2001–2002 election cycle, Republicans raised more than $441 million in hard-money contributions, compared with $217 million for the Democrats, an advantage experts attributed in no small part to the GOP's direct-mail network.) In his 1980 book, *The New Right*, Viguerie described direct mail's ability to spur political activism:

> A letter may ask you to vote for a candidate, volunteer for campaign work, circulate a petition among your neighbors, write letters and postcards to your Senators and Congressmen ... and also ask you for money to pay for the direct mail advertising campaign.

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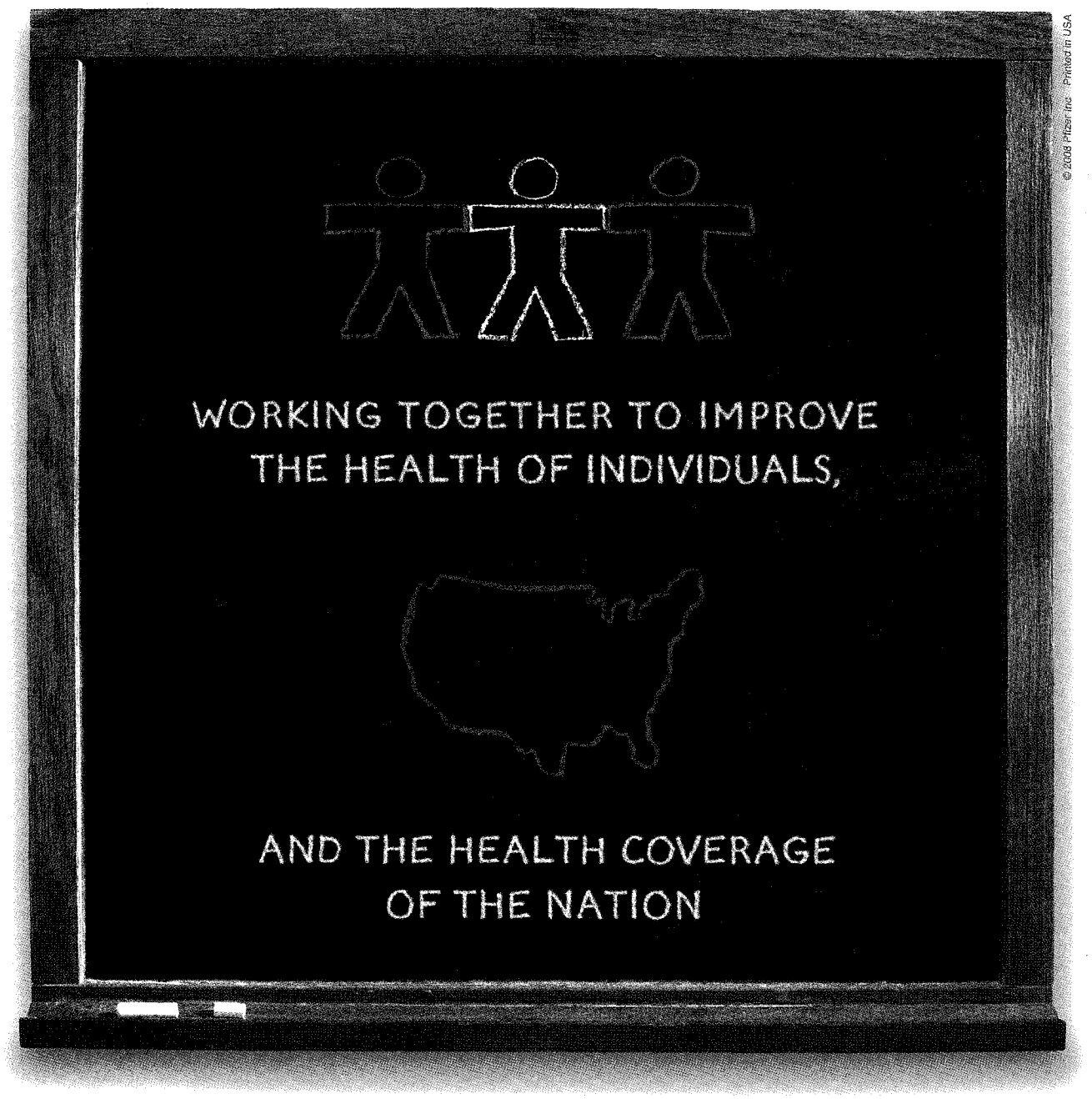

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This description could apply equally well to the rise of the liberal "netroots." But the Internet's social-networking technology doesn't just allow the Vigueries of the left to mobilize individuals—it helps them build a community of the outraged and the activated. Barack Obama's campaign has drawn heavily on the prowess of this new progressive ecosystem, and on its verve and creativity. (By the end of April, Obama had raised $272 million from 1.5 million donors, much of it online.) Just four years ago, liberals fumed with jealousy at the effectiveness of the conservative message machine. Now conservatives are panicking over the strength of the "people powered" movement that was created to counter it.

The panic has produced action. The casino mogul Sheldon Adelson, for example, has reportedly poured tens of millions of dollars into Freedom's Watch, a pro–Iraq War advocacy group originally billed as a right-wing answer to MoveOn. But Adelson's group has conspicuously failed to live up to that billing: while MoveOn and its imitators can legitimately claim to be people-powered grassroots groups, Freedom's Watch feels like the billionaire-funded lobbying outfit it really is.

The more-promising work comes from young conservative activists building from the bottom up. This spring saw the launch of a Web site called The Next Right, formed in conscious imitation of left-wing communities such as Daily Kos and MyDD. Like those destinations, The Next Right is a community Web site—any registered user can start a blog—dedicated to debating the steps conservatives need to take to rebuild a Republican majority, and to pushing the Republican establishment toward a more forward-leaning communications strategy.

The driving force behind the site is Patrick Ruffini, the director of the Republican National Committee's highly successful "eCampaign" operation from 2005 to 2007, who at 30 looks poised to become one of the most influential Republican political strategists of his generation. As a blogger, Ruffini has cast a harsh eye on Republican tactical failures, while offering more than grudging respect for Democratic successes. Ruffini's lack of interest in "punditry," a word he uses with disdain, and his number-cruncher's love of hard data have set the tone for The Next Right, which has quickly built a cadre of would-be Karl Roves competing with each other to create the cleverest framing devices for where conservatism needs to go.

Another aggressive rightroots figure is David All, a boyish 29-year-old consultant who served as Georgia Congressman Jack Kingston's ambassador to the blogosphere before opening his own shop. All speaks warmly of his relationship with Joe Trippi, Howard Dean's campaign manager and a netroots legend, while promoting a more forward-looking, youth-oriented GOP that embraces geek-chic causes like net neutrality.

If Ruffini and company have set out to copy the community-building side of the netroots' success, All aims to imitate their fund-raising achievements. Last October, he joined forces with a young California-based developer named Sendhil Panchadsaram to create Slatecard, a Web site that funnels contributions to conservative candidates. From its launch through late July, though, Slatecard raised an underwhelming $442,000; ActBlue raised nearly $30 million in the same period, and has raised more than $50 million since it started in 2004.

All points out that ActBlue took a while to get off the ground, falling short of $1 million during its first election cycle. But that was four years ago, which goes to show how much ground the rightroots have to make up.

Any success they achieve will probably come too late to help John McCain. Republicans looking to the online future might learn more from McCain's vanquished primary rivals than from the nominee himself. The year's most successful online conservative campaign belonged to the libertarian populist Ron Paul, whose army of young volunteers created their own Web sites, music, and videos touting Paul's candidacy and channeling money his way. His astonishing fund-raising totals—$34 million overall—never translated into votes, but Paul's supporters demonstrated how online tools could dramatically amplify the message of a determined minority.

So too with Mike Huckabee, whose campaign achieved some online success generating small-donor contributions, presumably from its evangelical base, while drawing on the star power of blue-collar celebrities like Chuck Norris and the wrestler Ric Flair. In the process, the campaign demonstrated that a Web operation could raise money outside the latte-sipping, Volvo-driving demographic that (allegedly) fueled the rise of Howard Dean.

What the Paul and Huckabee campaigns had in common was an embattled spirit, a sense of outrage against the powers that be. Jon Henke, one of Patrick Ruffini's partners at The Next Right, argues that a "unifying grievance"—like the netroots' opposition to the Iraq War—is essential to mobilizing a party's base. After years in power, this is something the GOP as a whole conspicuously lacks.

Ruffini is well aware of this problem. Outrage is the logistical backbone of any political movement, he told me—it's the equivalent of Wal-Mart's supply chain. No outrage, no ActBlue. No outrage, no Daily Kos. No outrage, no Obama.

"What are we outraged about?" Ruffini mused. "If the underlying message is not right, you can't sell that. You can't put a shiny package on it."

This is not to say that infrastructure-building is trivial. Direct mail didn't just reflect outrage; it helped deepen and define it. Shrewd political entrepreneurs don't just push pet causes. They follow the grassroots conversation, whether it happens online or off, and identify potent sources of political discontent.

So what will outrage conservatives enough to spark a rightroots-driven revival? To find out, we may have to wait for an Obama administration.

Reihan Salam is an *Atlantic* associate editor and the co-author of *Grand New Party: How Republicans Can Win the Working Class and Save the American Dream* (2008).

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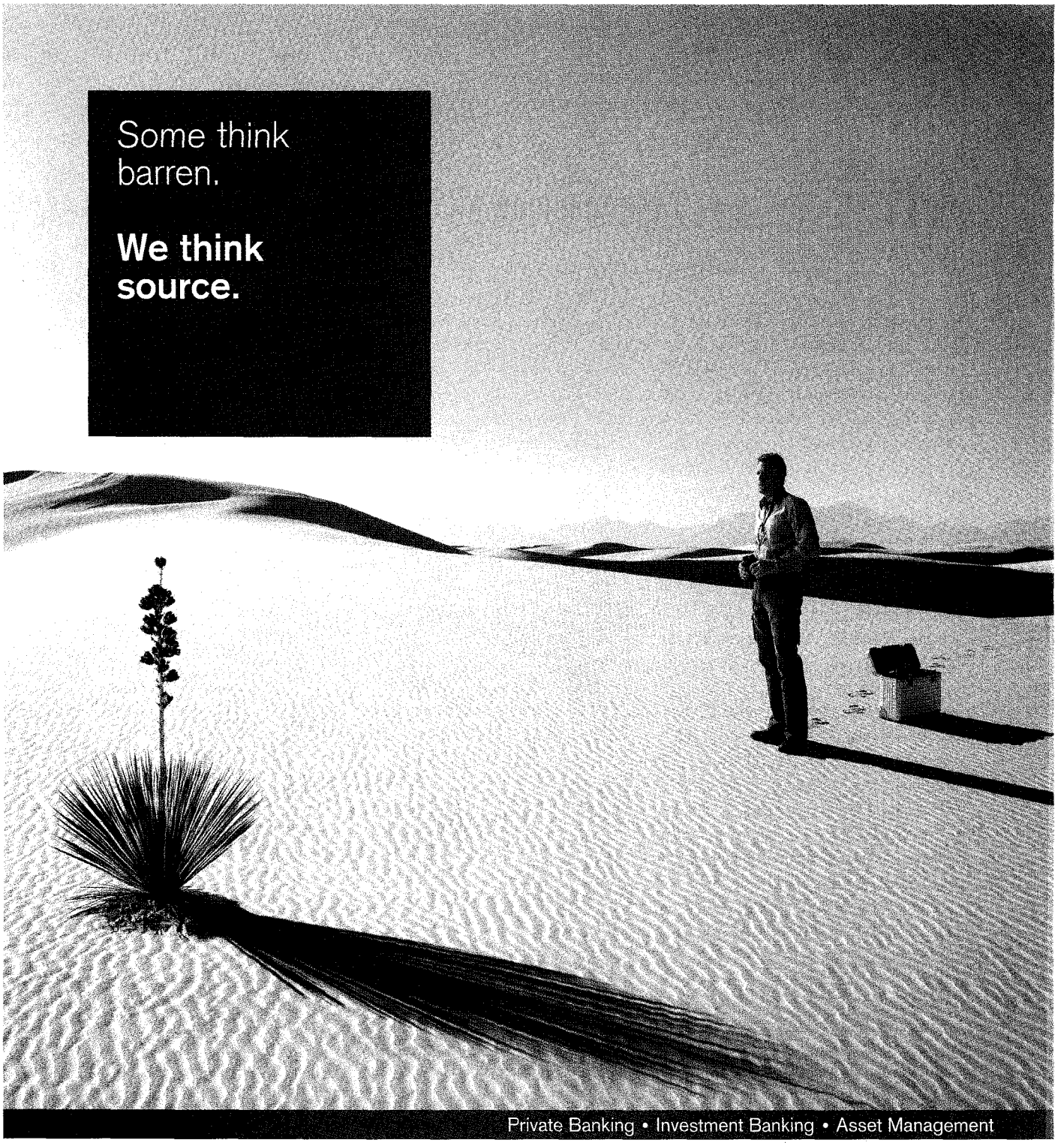

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Prosecuting the war in Afghanistan from provincial capitals has been disastrous; we need to turn our military strategy inside out.

All Counterinsurgency Is Local

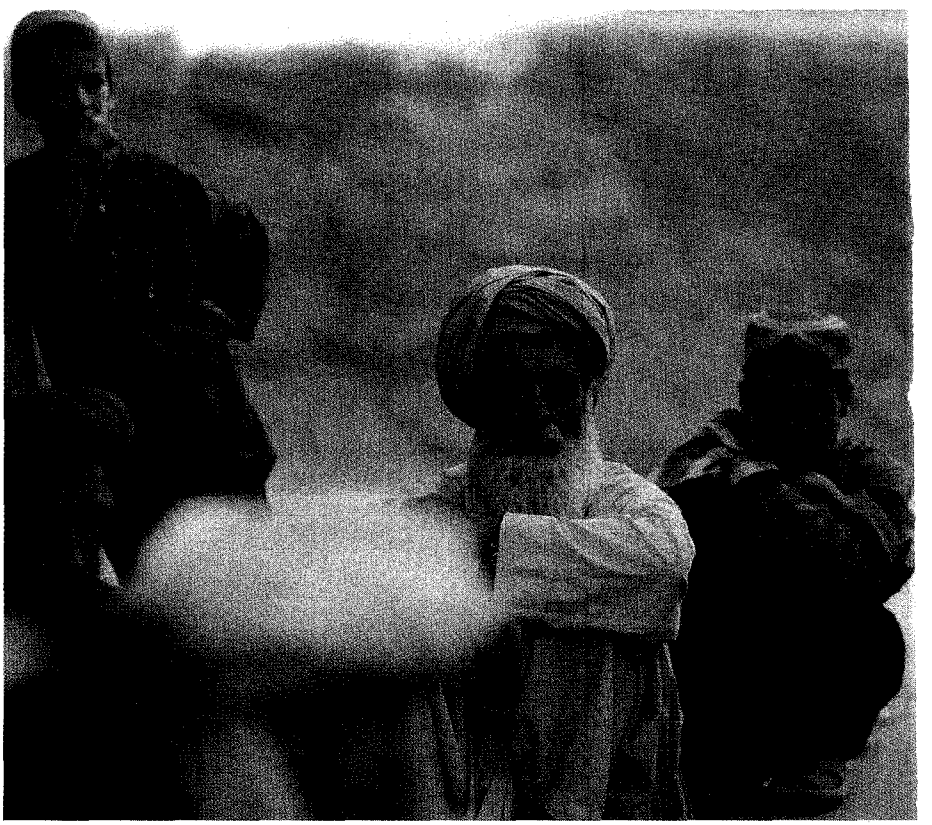
BY THOMAS H. JOHNSON AND M. CHRIS MASON

June was the deadliest month for the U.S. military in Afghanistan since the invasion in October 2001. July became the second straight month in which casualties exceeded those in Iraq, where four times as many U.S. troops are on the ground. More Americans have been killed in Afghanistan since the invasion began than in the first nine years of the Vietnam War, from 1956 to 1964.

As in Vietnam, the U.S. has never lost a tactical engagement in Afghanistan, and this tactical success is still often conflated with strategic progress. Yet the Taliban insurgency grows more intense and gains more popular traction each year. More and more, the American effort in Afghanistan resembles the Vietnam War—with its emphasis on body counts and air strikes, its cross-border sanctuaries, and its daily tactical victories that never affected the slow and eventually decisive erosion of rural support for the counterinsurgency.

As the Russian ambassador to Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, noted in a blunt interview with the BBC in May, the current military engagement is also beginning to look like the Soviets' decade-long Afghan adventure, which ended ignominiously in 1989. That intervention, like the current one, was based on a strategy of administering and securing Afghanistan from urban centers such as Kabul and the provincial capitals. The Soviets held all the provincial capitals, just as we do, and sought to exert influence from there. The mujahideen stoked insurgency in the rural areas of the Pashtun south and east, just as the Taliban do now.

The U.S. engagement in Afghanistan is foundering because of the endemic failure to engage and protect rural villages, and to immunize them against insurgency. Many analysts have called for more troops inside the country, and for more effort to eliminate Taliban sanctuaries outside it, in neighboring Pakistan. Both developments would be welcome. Yet neither would solve the central problem of our involvement: the paradigm that has formed the backbone of the international effort since 2003—extending the reach of the central government—is in fact precisely the wrong strategy.



CHARLES ECKERT/POLARIS

National government has never much mattered in Afghanistan. Only once in its troubled history has the country had something like the system of strong central government that's mandated by the current constitution. That was under the "Iron Emir," Abdur Rehman, in the late 19th century, and Rehman famously maintained control by building towers of skulls from the heads of all who opposed him, a tactic unavailable to the current president, Hamid Karzai.

Politically and strategically, the most important level of governance in Afghanistan is neither national nor regional nor provincial. Afghan identity is rooted in the *woleswali*: the districts within each province that are typically home to a single clan or tribe. Historically, unrest has

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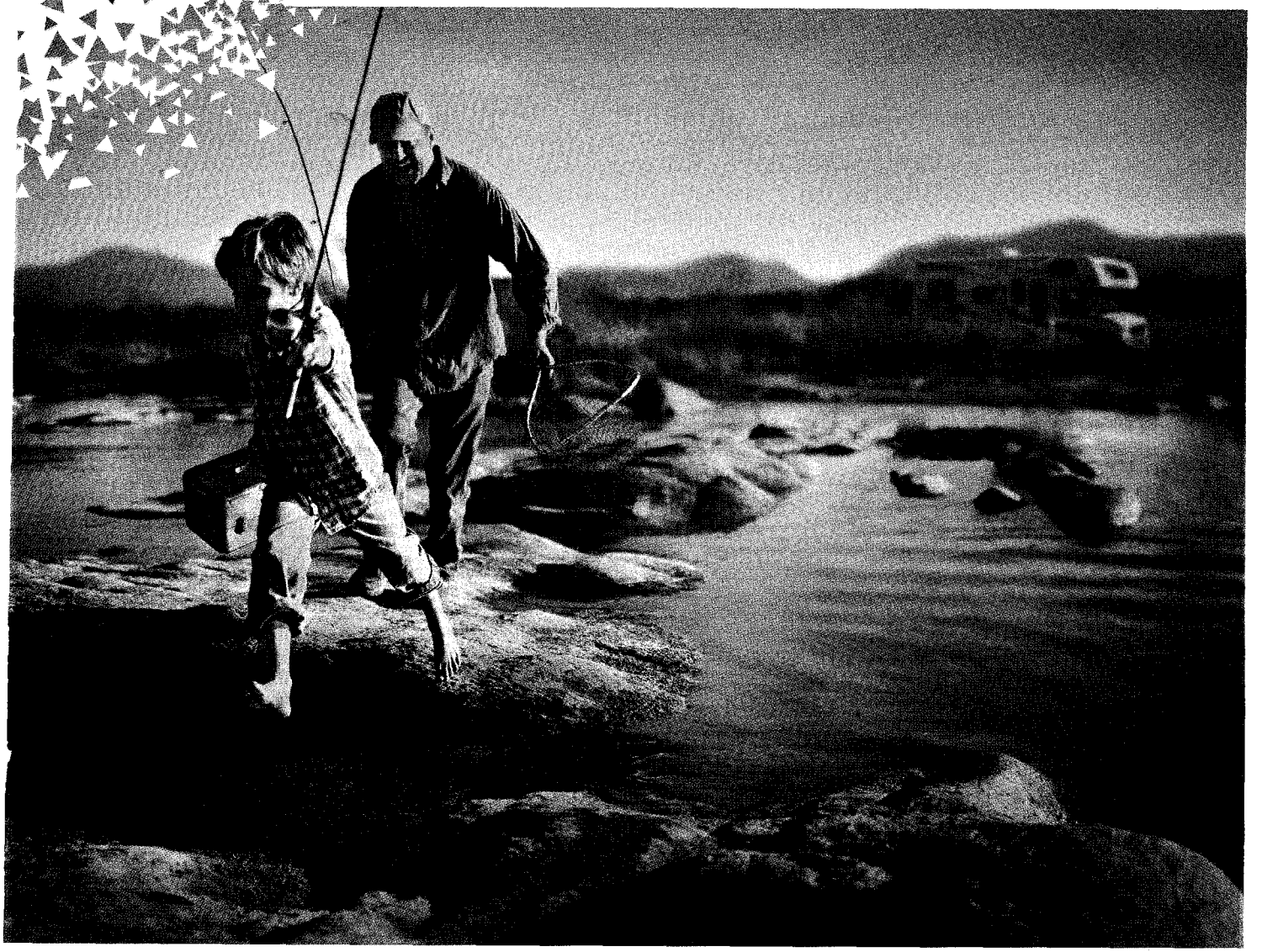

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always bubbled up from this stratum—whether against Alexander, the Victorian British, or the Soviet Union. Yet the *woleswali* are last, not first, in U.S. military and political strategy.

Large numbers of U.S. and NATO troops are now heavily concentrated in Kabul, Kandahar, and other major cities. Thousands of U.S. personnel are stationed at Bagram Air Force Base, for instance, which is complete with Burger King, Dairy Queen, and a shopping center, but is hundreds of miles from the heart of the insurgency. Meanwhile, the military's contact with villagers in remote areas where the Taliban operate is rare, typically brief, and almost always limited to daylight hours.

The Taliban are well aware that the center of gravity in Afghanistan is the rural Pashtun district and village, and that Afghan army and coalition forces are seldom seen there. With one hand, the Taliban threaten tribal elders who do not welcome them. With the other, they offer assistance. (As one U.S. officer recently noted, they're "taking a page from the Hezbollah organizations in Lebanon, with their own public works to assist the tribes in villages that are deep in the inaccessible regions of the country. This helps support their cause with the population, making it hard to turn the population in support of the Afghan government and the coalition.")

The rural Pashtun south has its own systems of tribal governance and law, and its people don't want Western styles of either. But nor are they predisposed to support the Taliban, which espouses an alien and intolerant form of Islam, and goes against the grain of traditional respect for elders and decision by consensus. Re-empowering the village councils of elders and restoring their community leadership is the only way to re-create the traditional check against the powerful political network of rural mullahs, who have been radicalized by the Taliban. But the elders won't commit to opposing the Taliban if they and their families are vulnerable to Taliban torture and murder, and they can hardly be blamed for that.

To reverse its fortunes in Afghanistan, the U.S. needs to fundamentally reconfigure its operations, creating small development and security teams posted at new compounds in every district in the south and east of the country. This approach would not necessarily require adding troops, although that would help—200 district-based teams of 100 people each would require 20,000 personnel, one-third of the 60,000 foreign troops currently in the country.

The backbone of the international effort since 2003—extending the reach of the central government—is precisely the wrong strategy.

Each new compound would become home to roughly 60 to 70 NATO security personnel, 30 to 40 support staff to manage logistics and supervise local development efforts, and an additional 30 to 40 Afghan National Army soldiers. The troops would provide a steady security presence, strengthen the position of tribal elders, and bolster the district police. Today, Afghan police often run away from the superior firepower of attacking Taliban forces. It's hard to fault them—more than 900 police were killed in such attacks last year alone. But with better daily training and help only minutes away, local police would be far more likely to put up a good fight, and win. Indirectly, the daily presence of embedded police trainers would also prevent much of the police corruption that fuels resentment against the government. And regular contact at the district and village levels would greatly improve the collection and analysis of intelligence.

Perhaps most important, district-based teams would serve as the primary organization for Afghan rural development. Currently, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams," based in each provincial capital, are responsible for the U.S. military's local development efforts. These teams have had no strategic impact on the insurgency, because they are too thin on the ground—the ratio of impoverished Afghan Pashtuns to provincial reconstruction teams is roughly a million to one. Few teams are able to visit every district in their province even once a month; it's no wonder that rural development has been marred by poor design and ineffective execution.

Local teams with on-site development personnel—"District Development Teams," if you will—could change all that, and also serve to support nonmilitary development projects. State Department and USAID personnel, along with medics, veterinarians, engineers, agricultural experts, hydrologists, and so on, could live on the local compounds and work in their districts daily, building trust and confidence.

Deploying relatively small units in numerous forward positions would undoubtedly put more troops in harm's way. But the Taliban have not demonstrated the ability to overrun international elements of this size, and the teams could be mutually reinforcing. (Air support would be critical.) Ultimately, we have to accept a certain amount of risk; you can't beat a rural insurgency without a rural security presence.

As long as the compounds are discreetly sited, house Afghan soldiers to provide the most visible security presence, and fly the Afghan flag, they need not exacerbate fears of foreign occupation. Instead, they would reinforce the country's most important, most neglected political units; strengthen the tribal elders; win local support; and reverse the slow slide into strategic failure.

Thomas H. Johnson directs the Program for Culture and Conflict Studies at the Naval Postgraduate School at Monterey, California. M. Chris Mason is a senior fellow at the Center for Advanced Defense Studies, in Washington, D.C. He recently served in the U.S. Foreign Service on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

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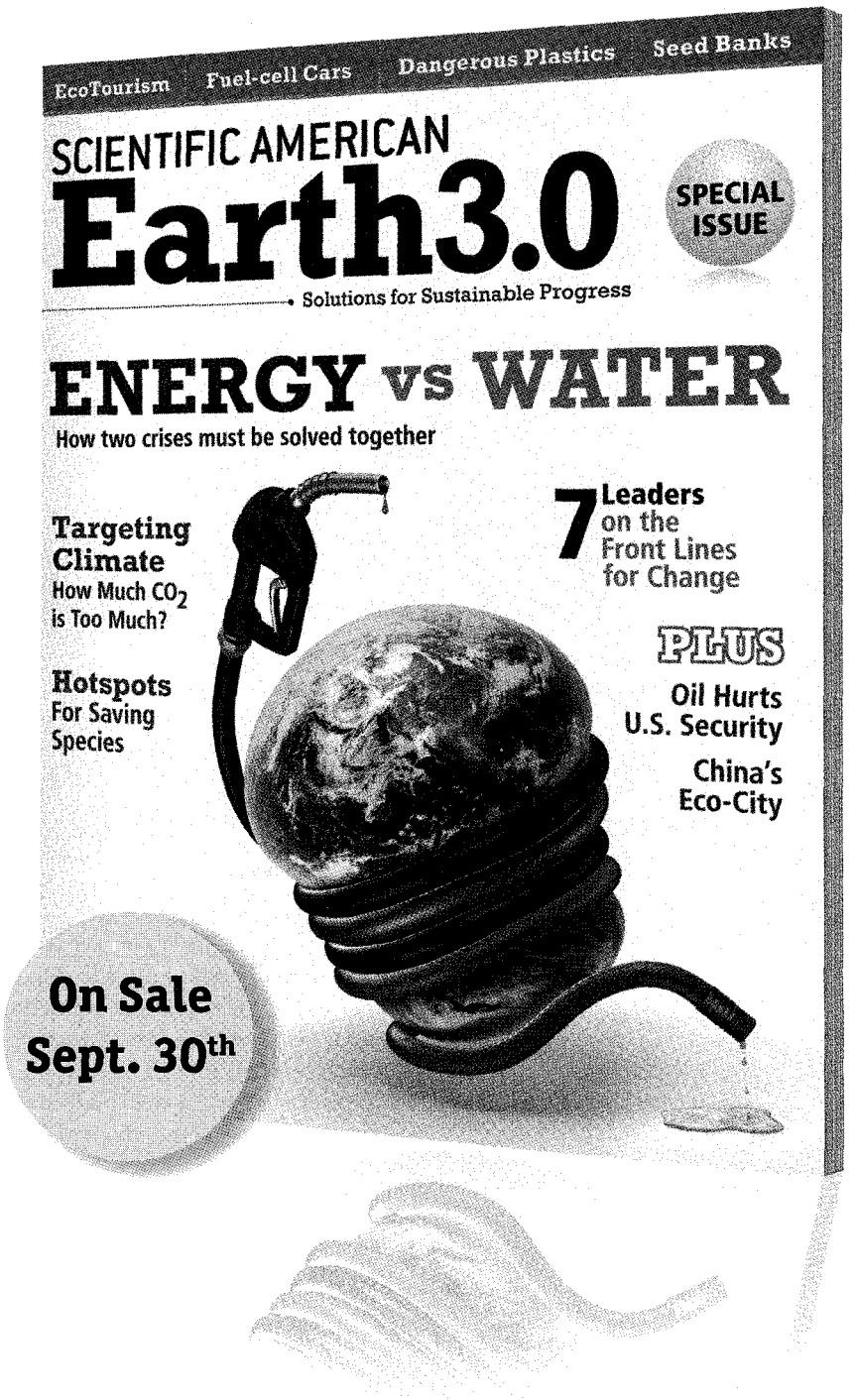

LOOK FOR IT AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND
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John McCain believes the Vietnam War was winnable. Now he argues that an Obama administration would accept defeat in Iraq, with grave costs to American honor and national security. Is McCain's quest for victory a reflection of an antiquated pre-Vietnam mind-set? Or of a commitment to principles we abandon at our peril? Is there any war McCain thinks can't be won?

BY JEFFREY GOLDBERG

The Wars of John McCain

IN APRIL OF 1969, the commander in chief of American forces in the Pacific, Admiral John S. McCain Jr., sent a cable to General Earle Wheeler, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and to General Creighton Abrams, the commander of American forces in Vietnam, with a pressing message. It is past time, Admiral McCain advised, for American units in Vietnam to overhaul their mission: the goal of the military effort in Vietnam should be to protect Vietnamese civilians from Communist insurgents, he wrote, rather than merely to hunt guerrillas in the countryside and then withdraw to the safety of permanent bases.

"The war has had from the outset major political as well as military overtones," Admiral McCain wrote. "All agencies recognize that this is the time to put emphasis on protection of population and special enhancement of civilian security." The South Vietnamese should do the main work of protecting civilians, McCain argued. The "national police should be the spearhead of this effort, and steps should be taken to attain the 120,000-man" South Vietnamese force by the following year.

The message was meant mainly for General Wheeler, and the Nixon administration. Abrams and McCain already agreed about the need to renovate American tactics in Vietnam. Both men were fairly new to their jobs. Abrams had succeeded General William Westmoreland the previous June and almost immediately had begun to discard many of Westmoreland's divisive, and tactically fruitless, ideas, most notably his emphasis on search-and-destroy missions, which did little to sequester civilians from Vietcong control. Abrams had helped create the policy, soon endorsed by Nixon, known

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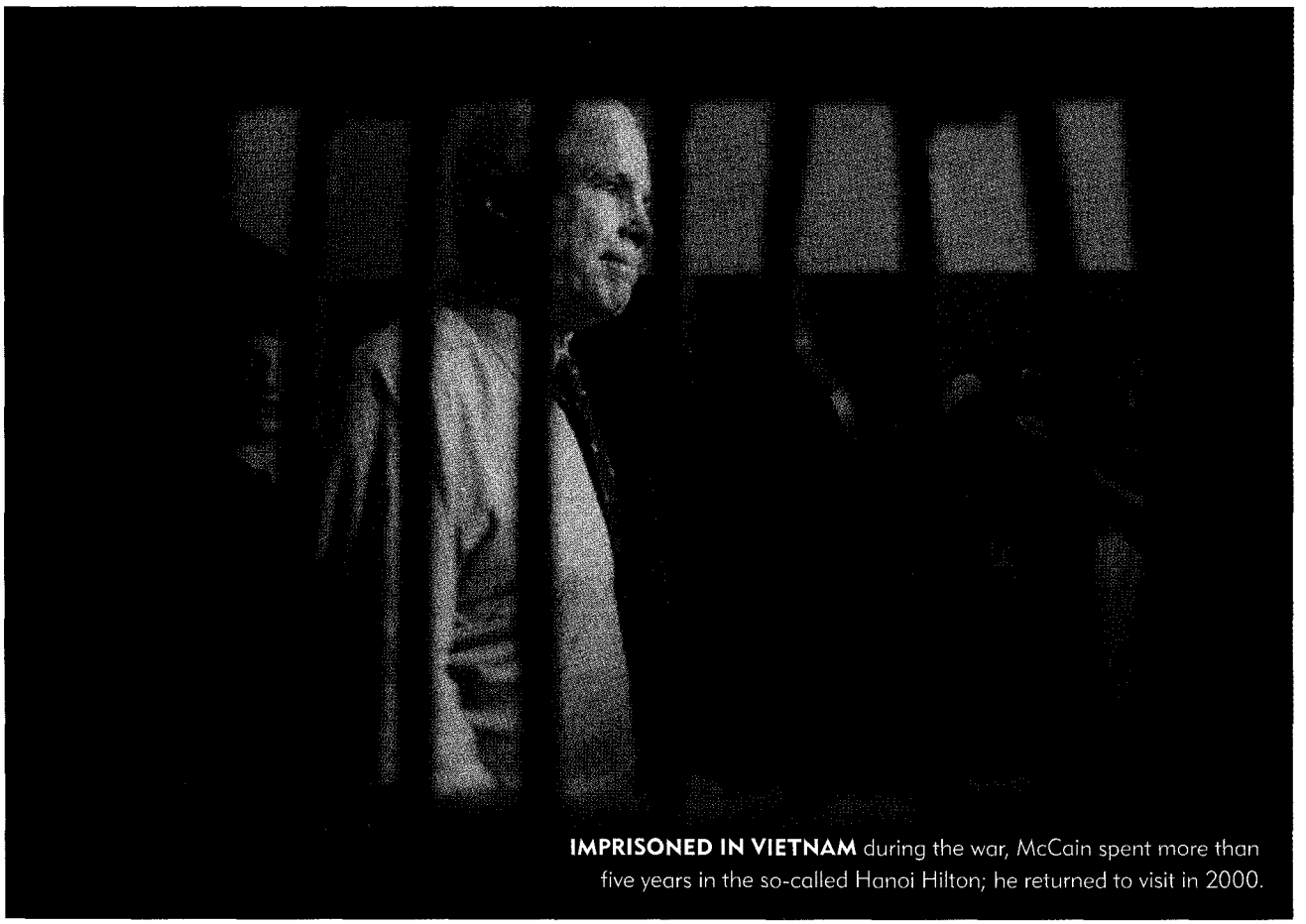

IMPRISONED IN VIETNAM during the war, McCain spent more than five years in the so-called Hanoi Hilton; he returned to visit in 2000.

JASON REED/REUTERS/CORBIS

as "Vietnamization," which demanded that the American-trained army of South Vietnam shoulder the burden of the fight against the north, and he had also tried, imperfectly, to reform the "Five O'Clock Follies," the press briefings that provided notably optimistic reports about the war's progress to a disaffected American public.

Abrams's son, the retired Army general John Nelson Abrams, told me recently that both his father and Admiral McCain knew that their time was not boundless. "The strategy was, how quickly could you get the Vietnamese military to go from a support role to a lead role," he said. The younger Abrams, who served in Vietnam as a frontline junior officer, and who dined with his father and Admiral McCain occasionally in Saigon during the war, said that both men understood that "time was running out for the American effort."

"They never doubted that they were on the right track, but they also recognized that the American national will was the single greatest factor in determining whether the outcome would be victory or not," he said. Both men were also impatient for victory, John Abrams said, in part out of concern for their own children. Two of Creighton Abrams's three sons were serving in combat units, and Admiral McCain's son, the naval aviator John S. McCain III, had been shot down over Hanoi on his 23rd bombing mission and was, at the time Admiral McCain drafted his cable to Wheeler and Abrams, a year and a half into what would turn out to be five and a half years of captivity in North Vietnam.

"You could see there was genuine fondness between them, and maybe in part because of the family commitment to the war, they were absolutely focused on winning," John Abrams said, speaking of the relationship between his father and Admiral McCain. McCain, however, did not speak of his son's captivity. "He would never show his emotions like that," Abrams told me. After John McCain was released, in 1973, he learned that on several Christmases during his captivity, his father had traveled to the northernmost reaches of American-held territory, to be as close to him as physically possible. And only in 1973 did Admiral McCain learn that John McCain III had been singled out by the North Vietnamese for especially rigorous torture because he was the son of an important admiral.

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The North Vietnamese, in fact, referred to Admiral McCain's son as the "prince."

If Admiral McCain had doubts about America's chance for victory, he concealed them expertly. In his public comments, he expressed supreme confidence that America had a plan in place to defeat the Communists. Though he was said to agree with General Abrams that overoptimistic reporting of battlefield successes had had the perverse effect of poisoning American public opinion, in a February 1969 interview with *Reader's Digest*, he said, "We have the enemy licked now. He is beaten. We have the initiative in all areas. The enemy cannot achieve a military victory; he cannot even mount another major offensive." In *Faith of My Fathers*, the biography of his father and grandfather—who was a legendary admiral of the Second World War—John McCain III reported that Henry Kissinger would bring Admiral McCain to see Nixon whenever the president seemed dispirited. "My father's no-nonsense determination, Dr. Kissinger claims, was infectious and served as a tonic for the President's flagging spirits," McCain wrote.

"1972?" he asked, reading it. "I hadn't seen this. I was still in the prison." He turned to Lindsey Graham, a Republican from South Carolina who is among his closest friends in the Senate, and who had wandered into the suite while McCain and I were talking. "Hey, Lindsey, look at this article. This is from when *The New York Times* still published op-eds by McCains," he said with a half-smile. The week before, the *Times* opinion editor had rejected a characteristically pugnacious McCain op-ed that was highly critical of Barack Obama, for what McCain called his flawed understanding of the situation in Iraq.

I handed McCain a batch of his father's exhortative cables to General Abrams. I've known McCain for some time and, while he can be a heroic talker, given to digressive, and often droll, colloquies on the news of the day, it has sometimes been difficult to pry from him insights into his own experience in Vietnam; he has a general aversion to what he once described to me, in a different context, as "this psycho stuff," meaning, among other things, self-analysis. So I was hoping these cables, which he hadn't previously seen, would prompt him to introspection.

There are eerie parallels between Admiral John McCain's steadfast commitment to victory in Vietnam, and Senator John McCain's pursuit of victory in Iraq.

"The reason I thought it would be helpful for President Nixon to see Admiral McCain on occasion was because he thought what we were doing was doable," Kissinger told me a few weeks ago. "He talked about the practical problems. He wasn't weighted down by what the op-ed pages of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* said." Kissinger explained that although Admiral McCain spoke of "victory," he understood the ambition of the Nixon administration to be the more finely calibrated goal of "withdrawal with honor."

In 1972, the just-retired Admiral McCain wrote an opinion article for *The New York Times* in which he stated, "The South Vietnamese are doing sound military planning; the South Vietnamese Army has come of age; and the South Vietnamese Air Force is performing a steadily growing role in support of South Vietnamese Army ground forces. Vietnamization is successful."

Less than three years later, Saigon fell to an invasion force of North Vietnamese tanks and infantry.

There are some obvious, even eerie, parallels between Admiral John McCain's steadfast commitment to victory in Vietnam, and Senator John McCain's dogged pursuit of victory in Iraq.

A few weeks ago, sitting in his suite in a Columbus, Ohio, hotel, I handed the senator a copy of his father's 1972 *Times* opinion piece.

He pulled one out and began to scan it. "Look at this," he said, holding up an April 1969 message from his father to Wheeler and Abrams. He started to read aloud: "As shown in the negotiations in Paris, the government of Vietnam is acting more independently of the U.S. and may become even more independent as U.S. troops begin to withdraw."

He put down the cable and laughed. "History repeats itself, huh?" he said. "You're darn right history repeats itself."

A few days before this conversation, the German magazine *Der Spiegel* had published an interview with the prime minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, who seemed to express support for Obama's plan to withdraw American troops from Iraq within 16 months of his taking office. "That, we think, would be the right time frame for withdrawal, with the possibility of slight changes," Maliki was quoted as saying. Though a spokesman for Maliki later argued, unconvincingly, that the prime minister's remarks had been mistranslated, the statement buttressed Obama and damaged McCain. McCain is an unfaltering supporter of General David Petraeus, the former commander of American forces in Iraq and now chief of U.S. Central Command, who argues that conditions on the ground, rather than a set timetable, should dictate the pace of American withdrawal. Now, it seemed, the Iraqis themselves were endorsing Obama's plan. McCain, of course, had been a prime supporter of the original invasion, while Obama, at the time an Illinois state senator, had argued against it.

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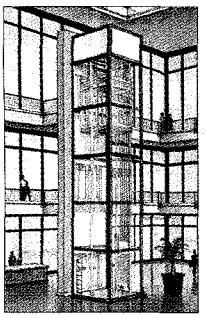

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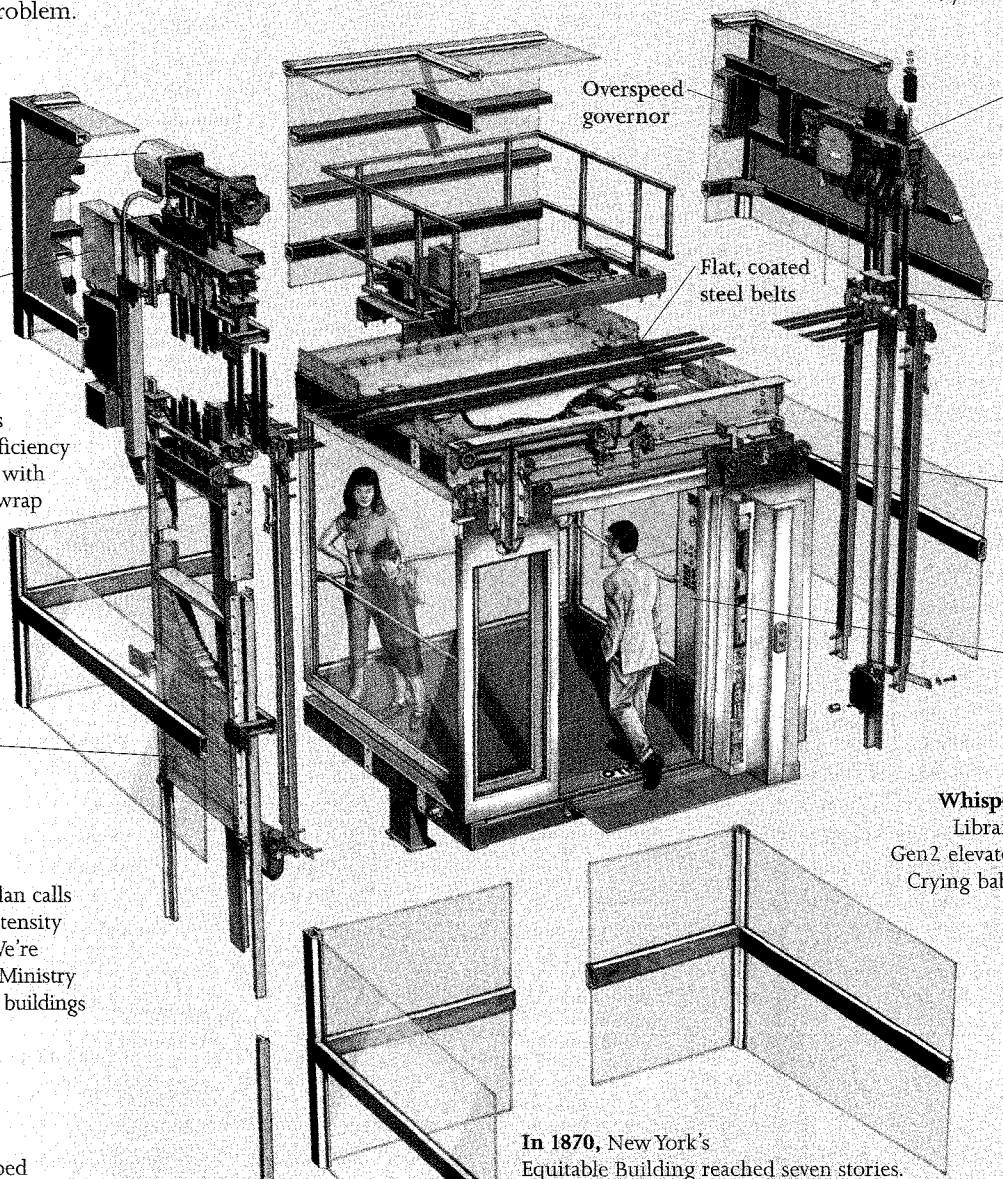

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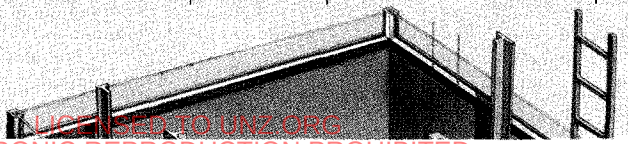

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Maliki's statement came at the outset of a conspicuously hapless stretch of campaigning for Senator McCain in midsummer, when he seemed to be slipping from bemused jaddedness about Obama into a disenchanting, Karl Rove–style aggressiveness. An hour before McCain and I met in Columbus, Senator Obama had delivered a speech to 200,000 people in Berlin, and Obama's tour of Middle Eastern and European capitals had enthralled the media. The McCain campaign's response to Obama's Berlin visit was to arrange a luncheon for its candidate at a German restaurant. When McCain returned from lunch, he asked me a question about Obama: "Did he really appoint a transition team?" I told him Obama had. For a moment an insult seemed to be forming on his lips, but all he said was "Huh," as he shook his head.

Graham's presence in Ohio wasn't coincidental; he was staying close to McCain that week, in order to keep watch over the candidate's spirit. But Graham could not control McCain's incredulousness at the sight of Obama, a man he plainly does not respect, striding so assertively across large stages.

"I'm sure he's extremely intelligent, he's extremely articulate, and I'm sure he has the ability to learn—but he has no experience," McCain said of Obama. "Community organizing doesn't lend itself to knowledge of national-security issues."

LT. JOHN S. McCAIN III and his parents, Roberta Wright McCain and Rear Admiral John S. McCain Jr., stand beneath a plaque of Admiral John S. McCain at the commissioning of McCain Field, July 14, 1961.

I pointed McCain to another cable, from August 1968, to General Abrams. In it, Admiral McCain, proposing a series of attacks near Hanoi, wrote, "I envisage, as in Tet, that our forces will again inflict serious casualties on the enemy ... If we can couple these losses with a resumption of a bombing campaign that will have a heavy military and psychological impact on the heartland, plus Arc Light [a B-52 bombing campaign] and ground follow-up raids into his Laotian/Cambodian sanctuaries, I believe we would be well along the road to winning the war militarily and the stage would be set for a favorable political settlement."

To Admiral McCain and other military leaders, the Tet Offensive of 1968, in which Vietcong guerrillas and North Vietnamese forces launched unsuccessful attempts on Saigon and other cities, was a tactical military defeat for the North Vietnamese. The attacks, which began on January 30, 1968, were meant to ignite a popular uprising in South Vietnam. Forces attacked five major cities—including Saigon, where the American Embassy was assaulted—as well as dozens of other smaller cities and towns. The attacks were repulsed almost immediately, except in the city of Hue, which was held by the North Vietnamese for nearly a month. When they recaptured Hue, American and South Vietnamese forces discovered the bodies of more than 5,000 civilians, many of whom had been executed. In part because of their own brutality, the uprising the North Vietnamese hoped for never materialized. "The Tet Offensive was a massive military and political defeat for the Communists, who had wrongly expected the South Vietnamese people to rise up and support the offensive," Jim Webb, now a Democratic senator from Virginia, wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* eight years ago.

But because of the scope of the offensive and the number of American casualties it inflicted, Tet was widely interpreted by the American media as a strategic defeat for the United States, and prompted a crisis within the Johnson administration. In his writings, Admiral McCain never appears to acknowledge that Tet was understood that way. His son does acknowledge that Tet was seen as a loss, but nonetheless rejects what he terms the "defeatist" interpretation.

"A turning point in the war came the day after the Tet Offensive, when Walter Cronkite, who was consistently voted the most respected man in America, said that he didn't believe we had any more reason to have a military presence in Vietnam," McCain told me in one of our recent conversations. "This is anecdotal, but Lyndon Johnson was said to have turned off the television, and said, 'We've lost the war.'" But, McCain said, "Tet was a military victory for America." He told me the story of a meeting between the North Vietnamese officer Colonel Tu and an American officer, at which "the American guy said, 'We won every battle,' and Tu said that was 'irrelevant.'"

McCain went on, "I believe I might take this one step further. We had literally all Americans out by 1973, and we had a Vietnamese army that was pretty capable but they needed our air support ... and Richard Nixon could not use air power because of Watergate, and it was a conventional invasion that the north launched against the south. So it really was a myth that somehow the Vietcong, these guys in black pajamas, were able to win against South Vietnam. It was guys in Soviet tanks, in armored columns," who overran the south, and they could

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have been repulsed by American air power and a properly equipped South Vietnamese army.

McCain's endorsement of Vietnam revisionism raises an inevitable question: Did the troop surge in Iraq provide him with an opportunity to achieve victory in the type of war that his father tried, but failed, to win?

McCain resisted the premise. "Vietnam cannot be the defining, overarching lesson of history," he said. "There are other lessons of history ... There are lessons in the Malaya conflict, the Korean conflict. One of the conscious things I've tried to do is not overlearn the lessons of Vietnam."

But could the Vietnam War have been won?

"I think it was winnable," he said.

I asked him if he had ever feared a repeat of Vietnam in Iraq.

"One gift of the Vietnam War was that I could see we were losing in Iraq," he said. "I could see the signs over there that we were losing: not enough boots on the ground, the Westmoreland strategy of 'go out and kill people and go back to the base and let [the insurgents] filter back in.'" Then he referred to one of his Iraq War nemeses, the current Army chief of staff, General George Casey, who preceded General Petraeus as commander of American forces in Iraq. McCain told me that Casey seemed to him to be a modern-day Westmoreland.

"Did you ever see the chart that Casey had for a while, that showed the Iraqi army's training numbers going up and up and then suddenly there's a gap?" he asked. "What happened? 'Well, we had a little setback in the training.' We're up to 250,000, 300,000, and then back to 100,000. Why's that? It was the same bullshit numbers as the Five O'Clock Follies."

McCain had already begun calling for a troop surge, and for a radical shift toward a more Creighton Abrams–like strategy of clearing territory of insurgents, and then keeping those insurgents out. The mission of additional troops, he wrote in a *Washington Post* op-ed that appeared in January of last year, "would be to implement the 'hold' element, elusive thus far, of the military's 'clear, hold, build' strategy: to maintain security in cleared areas, to protect the population and to impose the government's authority."

Recent American successes in Iraq seem to have justified the change in strategy that McCain had proposed, but during our conversation in Ohio a few weeks ago, McCain, and Graham, were at pains to remind me of the idea's former unpopularity. "John Edwards mocked the idea as the 'McCain Doctrine,' if you'll recall," Graham said. The surge, McCain said, "is the reason Harry Reid hates me so much, because he said the war was lost."

Was the word *lost* anathema to you? I asked McCain. "Well, that was certainly something that alarmed me. If you say the war is lost, who won? Does that mean al-Qaeda won against us? The Ba'ath Party?"

McCain was incredulous at the sight of Obama, a man he plainly does not respect, striding so assertively across large stages.

During the three years after President Bush declared an end to major combat operations, McCain was the rare Republican who was publicly critical of the administration, and in particular of General Casey and then–Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. His anger at Rumsfeld remains palpable. "You've got to tell people exactly what's going on," he said. "This goes back to 'Mission Accomplished,' 'a few dead-enders,' 'last throes.' I used to grind my teeth."

By the beginning of 2007, his frustration was boiling over publicly. At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, he reprimanded Casey. "You will need to explain why your assessment of the situation in Iraq has differed so radically from that of most observers and why your predictions of future success have been so unrealistically rosy," he said.

McCain reminded me that in July of last year, *The New York Times* had endorsed an immediate pullout of American troops, even if one consequence of such a withdrawal would be genocide. "Americans must be clear that Iraq, and the region around it, could be even bloodier and more chaotic after Americans leave," the *Times* editorial read. "There could be reprisals against those who worked with American forces, further ethnic cleansing, even genocide."

"Genocide!" McCain exclaimed.

"They were running for the exit signs," Graham said, and Democrats weren't the only ones unhappy with McCain's vociferous calls for troop increases.

"Some of our Republican friends were jumping ship," McCain said. "I can't tell you the number of guys who said, 'We've got to get out.'" Earlier he had told me, "I think another problem is that some of the leading thinkers in America said the war was lost, it was over—Tom Friedman of *The New York Times*, Joe Klein of *Time*, a long list of people who are widely respected said the war was lost."

Graham recalled the numerous bipartisan attempts, including one led by the Republican defense stalwart John Warner, to bring the war to a quick close: "There were nine different plans, and we beat the shit out of them. I love John Warner, but we just beat the shit out of him."

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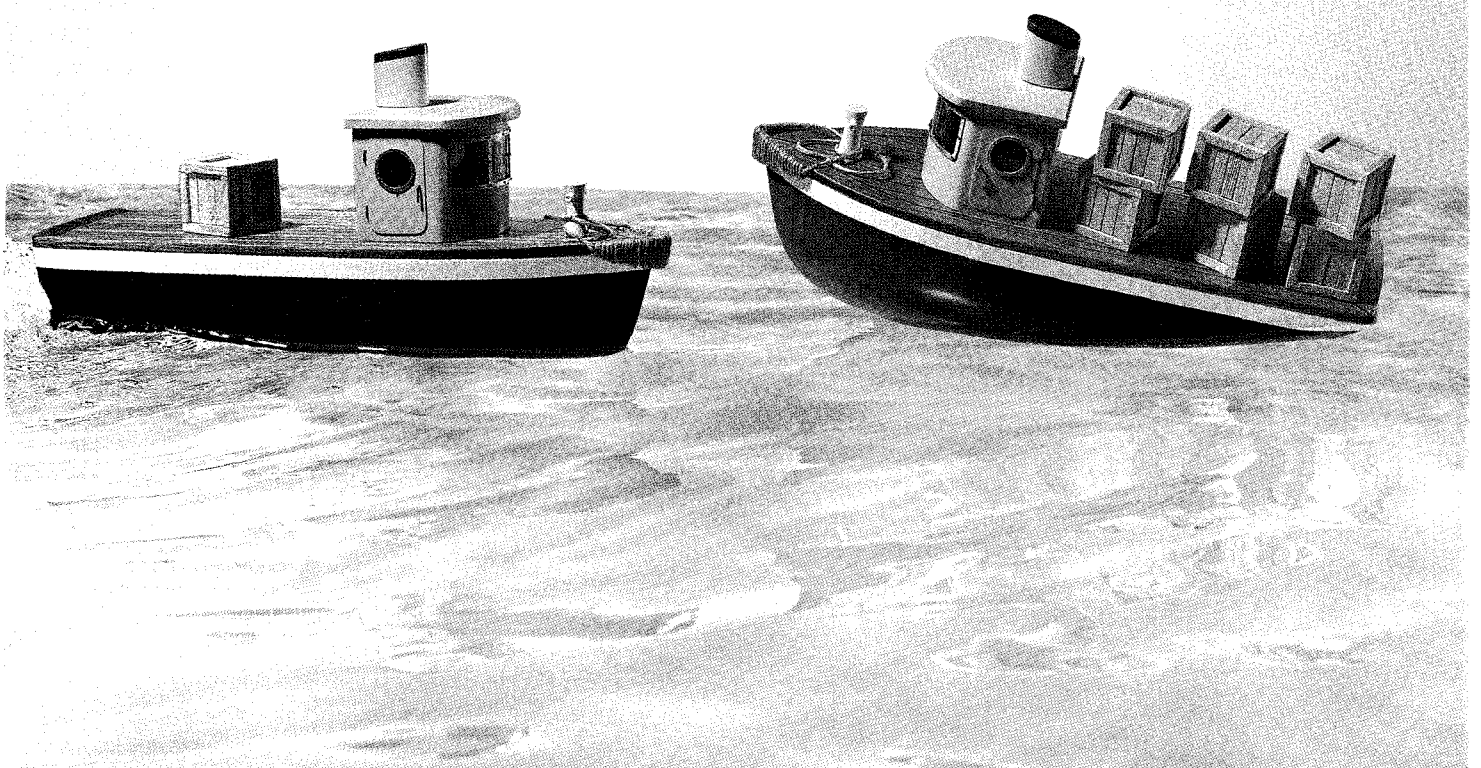

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"If we'd done what Obama wanted to do, we'd have been out by March 2008, and the surge could never have happened," McCain said.

I asked McCain if he thought Obama was a "defeatist."

"When he says 'End the war, whatever it takes to end it,' there's no doubt that—especially in the primary when he was appealing to the left of his party that felt betrayed by Hillary Clinton—that ending it was the first priority, just ending it. And that meant, whatever the consequences were. I'm not saying that he wanted defeat."

But, I asked him, didn't you say publicly that you believed Obama would rather lose the war than lose the election?

"I don't think he said we have to lose," McCain said, "but he did say in unequivocal terms, to standing ovations, 'I'll bring them home, we'll end it, we'll end it, I'll bring them home.'" (What McCain had actually said of Obama, just before this conversation, was: "It seems to me that Senator Obama would rather lose a war in order to win a political campaign.")

One of McCain's former Hanoi cell mates, Richard Stratton, once told me that he and his friends understood McCain's motivation during the fight for the surge. "I knew that the surge would work, because John McCain was in the Senate," said Stratton. "We knew that he wouldn't let what happened in Vietnam happen in Iraq."

I asked Orson Swindle, another former cell mate and a close friend of McCain's who now volunteers for his campaign, the same question I had asked the candidate: Was McCain's ardent support for the surge a way of making up for the failure of American politicians to help Creighton Abrams—and John McCain Jr.—implement their strategy for success in Vietnam?

"Look, Abrams's plan worked," Swindle said. "It was working. Very few people knew that. It's almost as if John looked at the solution in Vietnam and said that this could work in Iraq. To a certain extent, it's true. John was not going to let happen to these guys in Iraq what happened to us."

He went on, "He made this very McCain-like statement then that might to some have sounded a bit like grandstanding: 'I'd rather lose an election than lose a war.' Because he understood the profoundness of losing the war. Only a person with his life experiences could understand that."

I told Swindle that McCain had argued to me that he doesn't think about Vietnam overly much when he thinks about the wars of today.

"Bullshit," Swindle said. "He'll say Vietnam didn't affect him, that he doesn't think about it, that he's aloof from it. But I see it. It's there."

Despite the widely held perception among elites that the Vietnam War was both ignoble and unwinnable, for many Americans this is not an entirely settled question. A CBS News/*New York Times* poll conducted in 2000 found that 37 percent of Americans believed that it was a "noble cause," as opposed to 35 percent who thought it was not. And in academia, the Vietnam War's "winnability" is the subject of vigorous argument. Mainstream academic thinking still holds that America was predestined for failure in Vietnam, but revisionist scholars argue that victory—defined, in this case, as a non-Communist South Vietnam able to defend itself against North Vietnamese invasion—was possible, even into the mid-1970s.

"I would argue not only that we were winning in Vietnam, but that we had won, and then we kicked it away," Lewis Sorley, a former Army officer, whose book *A Better War* is the principal text of the revisionists, told me. "We defaulted on our commitments to the South Vietnamese, and that was the Congress that did that, not the military and not the administration."

Sorley argues that by the time of the American drawdown, in 1973, the South Vietnamese were able to repulse the north, with the help of American equipment and, to a lesser extent, air support. But Congress, eager to be done with the Vietnam quagmire, cut off all funding—"and that sealed the south's fate."

Sorley's is still a minority view. "We lost in Vietnam because we got beat," Andrew J. Bacevich, an international-relations scholar at Boston University and a Vietnam veteran, told me. "I served during the period when Abrams was supposedly

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Big golden harps make me think of angels,
But here's one, only as tall as my knee.

I kneel down to peer at its pedigree
Typed on a card. It doesn't have pedals

But ivory levers along the column.
The gilt is fading, and the base looks frail.

Is this a lyre? Did Greek poets wail
Iambic verses as they plucked and strummed?

No, Thomas Moore once owned this instrument.
The harp that once through Tara's halls, I hum

Like my father, who loved old Irish songs.
On a small harp like this you could invent

Your own world, the way a sonnet becomes
A frame of strings we yearn to play along.

—MAURA STANTON

Maura Stanton's new collection of poems is *Immortal Sofa*. She teaches writing at Indiana University.

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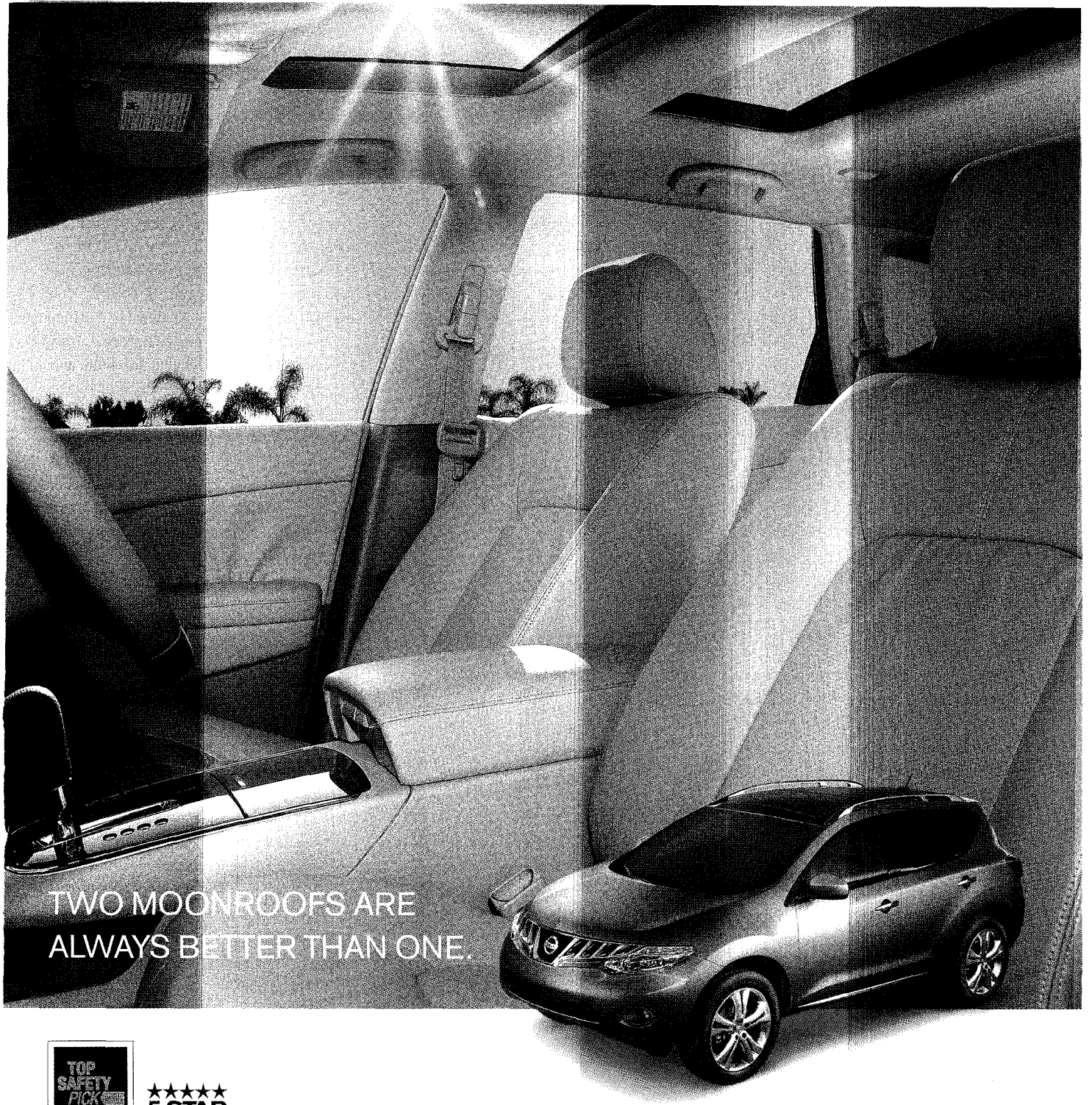

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winning the war, and what I saw there [in the Central Highlands of Vietnam] makes it impossible for me to believe that we were winning. That's a personal statement, not a scholarly judgment, but what I saw were South Vietnamese forces that were utterly incapable, a South Vietnamese government that was utterly ineffective, and an American Army that was falling apart." But among many of John McCain's peers—the roughly 660 POWs who were freed in 1973—there seems to be little doubt on the subjects of the war's nobility, and its winnability. In recent days, I've spoken with a number of McCain's fellow POWs, and they were in agreement on these two subjects.

"There was a time when politicians were dedicated to winning wars," one ex-POW, John M. McGrath, told me. McGrath serves as the historian for an organization of ex-prisoners called Nam-POWs, of which McCain is a member. Of those 660 men who were captured by the North Vietnamese, or by their Vietcong proxies in Southeast Asia, about 590 are alive today; only those men who cooperated with the North Vietnamese, or took early release from Hanoi, are ineligible for membership in Nam-POWs. (The North Vietnamese offered some of their prisoners early release in exchange for making anti-American propaganda statements. The POWs insisted that, according to their honor code, prisoners could be released only in the order in which they were captured.)

NIXON GREETS McCAIN at a White House reception for returned prisoners, May 24, 1973.

McGrath, a former Navy pilot who was shot down south of Hanoi in 1967, on his 179th mission, said that a failure of American will, rather than a failure of tactics, caused the U.S. to "abandon" the objective of South Vietnamese independence, which could have been achieved and guaranteed in the manner that the U.S. has, with the help of the American troops stationed there, guaranteed South Korean independence from North Korea for more than 50 years.

In my conversations with ex-POWs, talk turned again and again to Tet—a military victory instantly viewed as a defeat. Many survivors of the so-called "Hanoi Hilton," where a large contingent of the prisoners were held, report that after Tet, their captors bragged about their smashing propaganda victory against the Americans. "They told us all the time how they were going to win the war," McCain's cell mate Richard Stratton told me. "Even before Tet, the interrogators always said, 'We can't win on the field of battle. We're going to make friends with dissident groups in your country, and then we're going to force your government out of our country.' Then they told us they won in Tet, and in one way, they were right. They won because America thought they won."

Many of the POWs still express anger at Lyndon Johnson for mismanaging the war, and in particular they blame the organized left, and what they see as its sympathizers in the press, for mislabeling a North Vietnamese offensive that was clearly repelled as a defeat for the Americans. "The thing that really bothered me was that LBJ, he let those demonstrations on college campuses really affect him," Paul Galanti, a Navy pilot who was shot down and taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese in 1966, told me. "He should have smashed those demonstrations. To let them happen was anarchy." Galanti, like several other ex-POWS, was a supporter of Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, the group that spread unfounded accusations about John Kerry in 2004. The "Swift Boat" attacks against Kerry were a delayed reaction to what some veterans saw as Kerry's betrayal of their cause upon his return home from Vietnam. "I have some pretty strong feelings about those sorts of people," Galanti said.

Galanti and others among the ex-POWs continue to feel resentment toward the press, and the antiwar left. It is understandable, of course, that these men would be angry at the Americans who visited Hanoi during the war as part of "peace" delegations, and who expressed solidarity with the North Vietnamese, who were then torturing American servicemen in the same city. And it is understandable that they would be critical of what they saw as self-defeating American tactics.

"I think a lot of us feel that it would have been nice, when we came out of jail, to find out that we had won the war," McGrath said.

McCain seems to be in a minority of ex-POWs, in that he does not seem actively resentful of the American left, his Vietnamese captors, or, particularly, the politicians who, in the mid-1970s, voted to cut off funding for South Vietnam. "McCain's a guy who became friends with antiwar protesters, and he worked hard to normalize relations with Vietnamese," Mark Salter, his senior adviser and co-author of five of his eight books, told me. McCain says that when he was released, he was mainly concerned with the war's effect on the country's morale, and on the military's. "At that time, I thought about how divided the country was," he told me. "You know, that was bothersome to me. The treatment of veterans—the only heroes were the POWs, people who had gotten captured, and in all due respect to us, that's not the object of warfare, to get captured."

RON SACHS/CORBIS SYGMA

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McCain said the seeming disintegration of the military as a fighting force in the dispiriting days after Vietnam worried him most. "The drug problems—I was still in the military then, and you know, we had serious discipline problems, racial problems. One of the reasons why I felt so strongly about victory in Iraq was because the impact of what was basically a defeat on our military in Vietnam was devastating."

Says Salter: "He left the horror behind in Vietnam, but he didn't leave the lessons—the personal lessons, and the political/military lessons. It's why he speaks about victory."

In a *New York Times Magazine* article published in May, the writer Matt Bai suggested that part of the reason why McCain, alone among the Vietnam veterans in the Senate, continued speaking about victory in Iraq was that as a POW, he essentially missed the Vietnam War. Some of his colleagues, Bai wrote,

> suspect that whatever lesson McCain took away from his time in Vietnam, it was not the one that stayed with his colleagues who were "in country" during those years—that some wars simply can't be won on the battlefield, no matter how long you fight them, no matter how many soldiers you send there to die.

Bai quoted another veteran, former Georgia Senator Max Cleland, who said: "I think you learn something fighting on the ground, like me and John Kerry and Chuck Hagel did in Vietnam. This objective of 'hearts and minds'? Well, *hello!* You didn't know which heart and mind was going to blow you up!"

Bob Kerrey, a former senator from Nebraska, who is a Vietnam veteran—and an Obama supporter—dissented from this view. When we spoke recently, he said that it's absurd to suggest McCain's experience as a tortured prisoner of the Vietnamese gave him an overly rosy view of how the war was progressing: "McCain lived that war. We all lived it differently, but you can't say that being a POW is sitting the war out. I mean, Jesus Christ."

Kerrey also dissents from the view, shared by many of McCain's friends, that Vietnam was the war that most shaped the candidate's view of today's conflicts. "Ask him the W. H. Auden question," he told me. "Auden used to ask people to name their first memory of a public event, what they remember that everyone else remembers. John probably remembers a war in which it was very clear who won and who lost."

"When I was a very small child," McCain said, when I asked him Kerrey's question, "I remember this: a guy pulled up in front of our house and said, 'Jack, the Japs'—that's what they called them then—'the Japs have bombed Pearl Harbor.' I remember [my father] going upstairs and grabbing some things, and from then on, I only saw him a couple of times until 1945. That's what I remember."

In 1945, McCain was 9 years old. He told me he remembers the celebrations well, but that these memories are shadowed by memories of his grandfather's death from a heart attack, four days after the Japanese formally surrendered on the deck of the battleship *Missouri*; Admiral John S. McCain Jr., who commanded a Fast Carrier Task Force in the Pacific, witnessed the signing.

'He'll say Vietnam didn't affect him, that he doesn't think about it, that he's aloof from it,' says McCain's former cell mate. 'But I see it. It's there.'

John McGrath, the POW historian, said that McCain's generation understood warfare through the prism of World War II. "As teenagers, I think we were shocked when in Korea, which they wouldn't even call a war, we had a negotiated victory," he said. "That was the first shock, that America would settle for a negotiated settlement. And you have Vietnam. I remember one statement that has always rung in my head, that we'll only have armed conflicts, no more wars."

John McCain has been said to have neoconservative inclinations; to critics, this suggests a commitment to the unilateral deployment of military force to bring about a democratic transformation in once-hostile countries. The question of whether he's a neocon, however, is not entirely relevant; McCain has advisers from both the neocon and realist camps, and he's too inconsistent to be easily labeled. In one area, though, he has been more or less constant: his belief in the power of war to solve otherwise insoluble problems. This ideology of action has not been undermined by his horrific experience as a tortured POW during the Vietnam War, or by the Bush administration's disastrous execution of the Iraq War. All this is not to suggest that McCain is heedlessly bellicose or reflexively willing to send U.S. soldiers into danger; he is the father of a marine and a Naval Academy midshipman, James McCain and John S. McCain IV, whose service he rarely mentions. And he opposed, presciently, keeping the Marines in Beirut in 1993, just before their barracks were bombed. But his willingness to speak frankly about the utility of military intervention sets him apart from his opponent. Senator Obama, though certainly no pacifist, envisions a world of cooperation and diplomacy; McCain sees a world of organic conflict and zero-sum competition.

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I asked McCain whether his experiences of two wars—World War II, which saw America achieve absolute victory over fascism, and Vietnam, which saw, in his view, America dishonor itself—have informed his opinions on the subject of victory in the more ambiguous wars of the 21st century.

"We know that there will never be in our lifetimes a celebration like V-J Day," McCain said. "I don't know of any enemy we face, or possible adversary, where there's a clear-cut victory. In Iraq, we will withdraw with honor, and the troops will come home, and there are other conflicts—in Afghanistan, over time, we'll grow an army—but there will be no church bells ringing all over America and prayers of thanksgiving in cathedrals."

Is this because of the nature of modern America?

"It's the nature of the adversary," he said.

Two aspects of his answer were interesting to me: his conscious use of the term *withdraw with honor*, with its explicit echo of Vietnam; and his equally explicit echo of an idea advanced by Philip Bobbitt, a Columbia law professor and former member of President Clinton's National Security Council, who argues in his new book, *Terror and Consent*, that the struggle against terrorism is in fact a war but that, unlike with previous wars, we will not know when this war is over.

McCain calls *Terror and Consent* "the best book I've ever read on terrorism." He has been carrying it with him this campaign season, showing underlined passages to his staff and to reporters, and he invited Bobbitt to fly with him for two days. *Terror and Consent* was recommended to him by Henry Kissinger, for understandable reasons: Kissinger, a foreign-policy "realist," embraces Bobbitt's argument that the so-called Bush Doctrine is "incoherent" because its call for the democratization of Arab states undermines another of its principles, the need to "preclude" states from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. "When we try to square the circle by connecting the means offered by the doctrine (unilateral action, preemption of the acquisition of WMD, counterterrorism) to its ends (promoting democracy), the doctrine falls apart," Bobbitt writes. "It is highly implausible that the president intended to suggest that the U.S. would, or should, use preemptive military strikes to impose democracy, or that democracy, whether imposed or not, supplies a check on proliferation, terrorism, or ethnic cleansing."

Bobbitt, like McCain, is also a stern critic of the Bush administration's endorsement of torture, and of what he called, in an interview with me, its "disregard" for the law. "Rather than seeking legal reform" to address the new challenges of terrorism, Bobbitt writes in his book, "the U.S. has used the inadequacy of the currently prevailing law as a basis for avoiding legal restrictions on government entirely."

The most controversial of Bobbitt's assertions is that the absence of actual stores of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq does not undermine the need for America to "preclude"—he prefers *preclude* to *preempt*—certain countries from developing WMDs in the future. Bobbitt writes:

> The war against a global terror network, al Qaeda, is in an early phase. Yet already owing to the Coalition invasion of Iraq, terrorists from this network or any other cannot someday call on Saddam Hussein to supply them covertly with weapons with which to attack the West when he would not have dared to have done so directly, and when he, but not they, had the resources to buy into a clandestine market in WMD.

The view of most Democrats, of course, is that the American experience in Iraq has almost fatally undercut the doctrine of preemption. Senator Jack Reed, a Democrat from Rhode Island and a former Army officer, who traveled with Obama to Iraq in July, said of McCain: "I think he's ignoring the consequences of Iraq. First of all, the intelligence and the arguments for Iraq have been proven universally wrong. The logic now is, 'It doesn't really matter if there are no facts to support this operation, because there's always a chance that a country could go bad.' I think this is totally unpersuasive as a matter of logic or strategy. The other test of Iraq is that it has cost us strategically. Iran is a much more influential country because of the Iraq invasion." He went on, "You can justify practically any military operation, not based on the facts of the moment but on what might happen years from now."

But McCain believes strongly that the only way to ensure Saddam would never pose a threat to American interests was to remove him from power. "Is there anyone who believes that Saddam Hussein wouldn't have pursued WMD?" he asked me. "He told his interrogators he would. Is there anybody who believes that the sanction regime was going to hold, or that the status quo would hold, or that sooner or later they wouldn't shoot down one of our planes patrolling the no-fly zone?"

This comment was unusual because McCain rarely discusses his original vote, in 2002, to authorize the Iraq invasion; he prefers to talk about the surge. The comment was also striking because it is almost identical to something he said to me around the time of the original vote. "There is no such thing as containment," he said then. "If we don't act, we'll pay the price later. If we 'give peace a chance,' Saddam will pursue his ambitions against us, but he will be more powerful, and more deadly than ever."

His constancy is noteworthy. Nothing in his experience, recent or not-so-recent, has moved him away from his essential belief that the president has a duty to confront perceived threats well before they reach American shores. I asked Kissinger whether he thinks that McCain can be too inflexible on the subject of preemption. He said McCain will not change his mind if he feels that the nation's defense is at stake. Much of this, Kissinger continued, is related to McCain's sense of national honor, and personal honor. "He will not do the easy thing," he said.

I pointed out that McCain has changed many of his positions during his candidacy in order, it seems, to better conform to Republican orthodoxy. Kissinger replied: "Under the pressure

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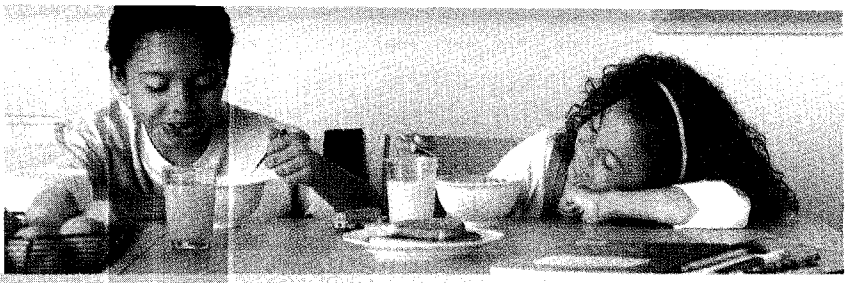

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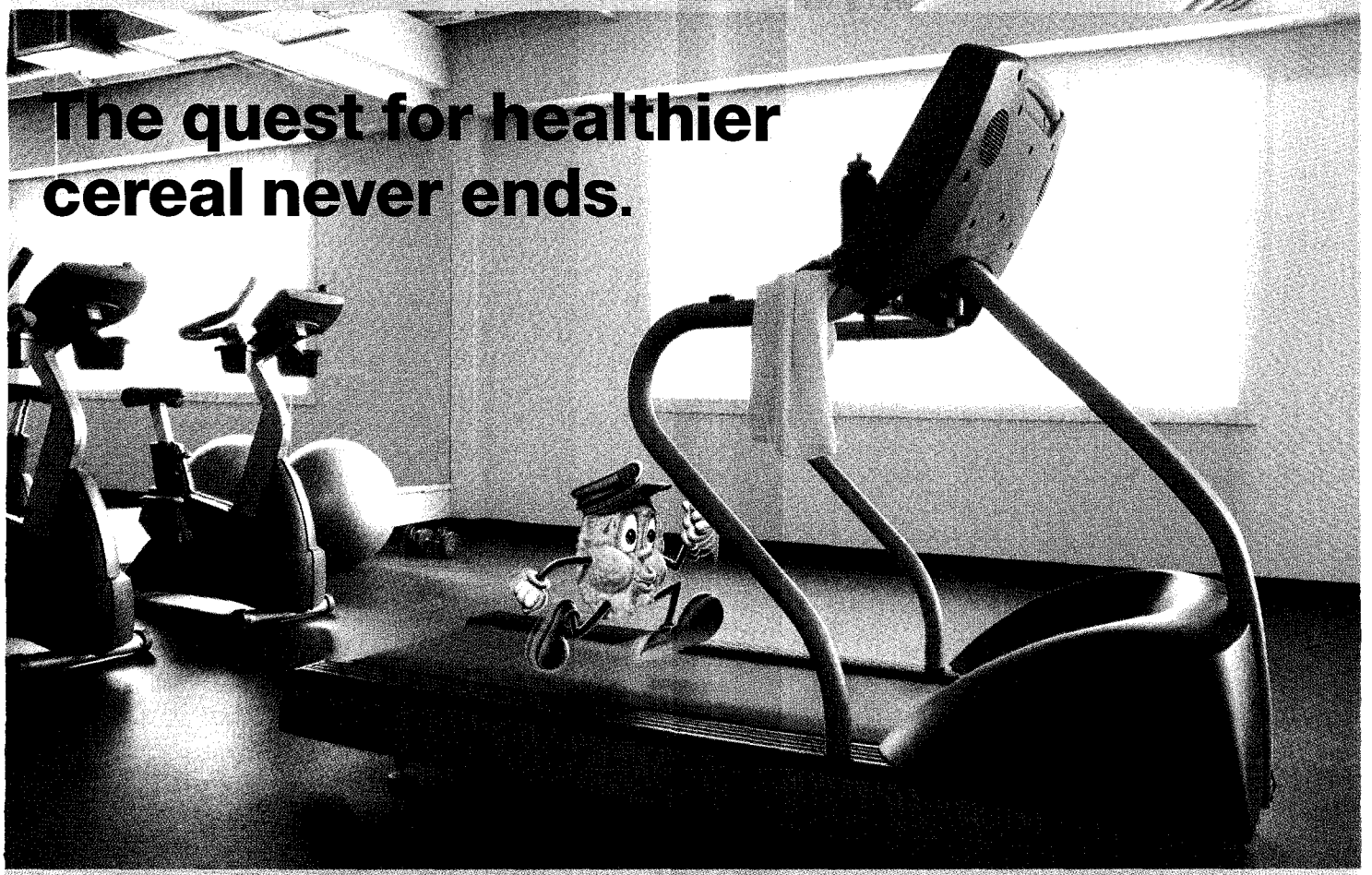

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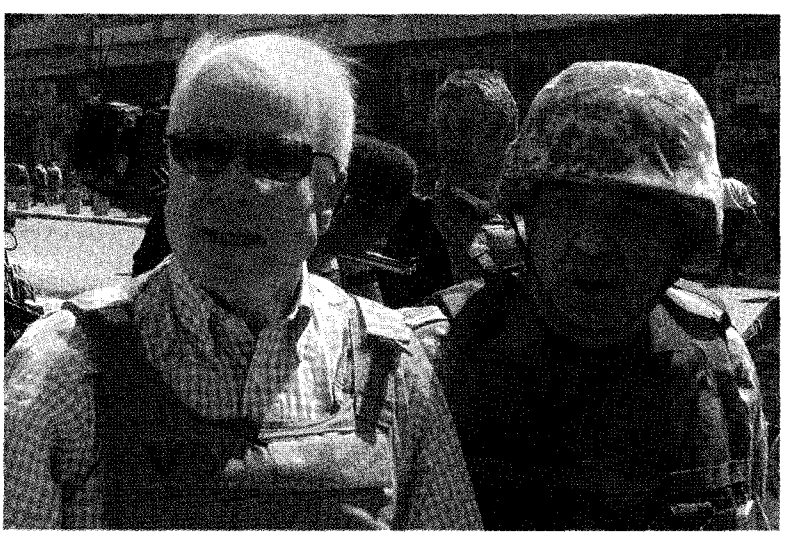
of a presidential campaign, it's possible that he will make adjustments. He may deviate from his positions, but he will not like himself for it."

In my conversations with McCain, however, he never appeared greatly troubled by his shifts and reversals. It's not difficult to understand why: tax policy, or health care, or even off-shore oil drilling are for him all matters of mere politics, and politics calls for ideological plasticity. It is only in the realm of national defense, and of American honor—two notions that for McCain are thoroughly entwined—that he becomes truly unbending.

Kissinger learned this at their first meeting. "When I was in Vietnam for negotiations on implementing the Paris Agreement, the North Vietnamese prime minister had a dinner—I was leaving the next day—and he said if I wanted to take



IN BAGHDAD, April 2007. McCain has made eight trips to Iraq since the invasion in 2003.

McCain on my flight, it could be arranged," he said. "I told him that I won't take McCain or anyone else on my plane. The prisoner release would have to happen on a schedule previously agreed. Somehow McCain heard about this and months later, at the White House reception for returned prisoners, he said to me, 'I want to thank you for saving my honor.' What McCain did not tell me at that time was that he had refused to be released two years earlier unless all were released with him. It was better for him to remain in jail in order to preserve his honor and American honor than to come home on my plane."

For McCain, the doctrine of preemption clearly falls outside the realm of mere politics, as does the need to "win," rather than "end," wars; the safety of America demands that they be fought, and honor demands that they be won.

McCain's father, Kissinger said, saw the world the same way McCain sees it. "He was a military man, not a diplomat. Both men grasp the notion of consequences. From about 1967 on, we were experiencing a national trauma, with obsessive doubts about the fitness of government and with a yearning to just get out of Vietnam and get it over with, with a refusal to look at the consequences. Both of them understood that withdrawal without honor has costs. The son knows this from his own experience and from his father."

I once asked Lindsey Graham to name something unusual about McCain in the context of the debate about Iraq; he said that McCain believes, among other things, that "some political problems have military solutions." A related McCain belief that's even more out of sync with America's current mood: wars are quagmires only until someone figures out a way to win them.

The most plausible target of a McCain-ordered preemptive war would be Iran. In January 2006, he said, "There's only one thing worse than the United States exercising the military option—that is a nuclear-armed Iran. The military option is the last option, but cannot be taken off of the table."

I asked him in Columbus to describe a situation in which preemption might be required. He offered a scenario in which Iran provides the terrorist group Hezbollah with weapons of mass destruction to use against Israel.

"While we don't go around launching preemptive strikes all the time, we can't afford to wait until a terrorist organization, or a nation which is an avowed enemy of the United States, has the capability to use weapons of mass destruction—or even uses them," McCain said. "If we knew with absolute certainty that the Iranians were going to support Hezbollah to make sure they got a weapon of mass destruction in southern Lebanon—would we just wait until Hezbollah attacks Israel with that weapon? Well, first of all, I don't think the Israelis would wait, but I'm not sure. The consequences, as we know, are catastrophic." (In May, when I asked McCain why the defense of Israel was an American national-security interest, he said, "The United States of America has committed itself to never allowing another Holocaust.")

But McCain, though stalwart in defense of preemption, is not obtuse about its unpopularity; he knows that the idea of preemption has taken on a negative cast.

"With preemption, the connotation is that the cowboy just wants to go out and attack people," he said. "The country is in one of our occasional periods of isolationism, a reaction to what [the public views] as failure, even when we are succeeding in Iraq—and we have succeeded in Iraq. There's still going to be a greater reluctance than there was" before the Iraq War to try to stop an adversary from gaining possession of weapons of mass destruction.

As he said this, he seemed depleted by the discussion of preemption. It's not the first unpopular cause he's adopted, but it might be the most difficult one to sell to the American public.

"It's very hard to run for president on this idea right now."

Jeffrey Goldberg, an *Atlantic* national correspondent and the author of *Prisoners: A Story of Friendship and Terror* (2007), blogs at jeffreygoldberg.theatlantic.com.

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Two idealistic Taiwanese businessmen happened into the most rural part of China and thought: Let's bring it from the 15th century to the 21st.

How the

BY JAMES FALLOWS

Photographs by Ariana Lindquist

WESTERN CHINA'S Yellow Sheep River Valley

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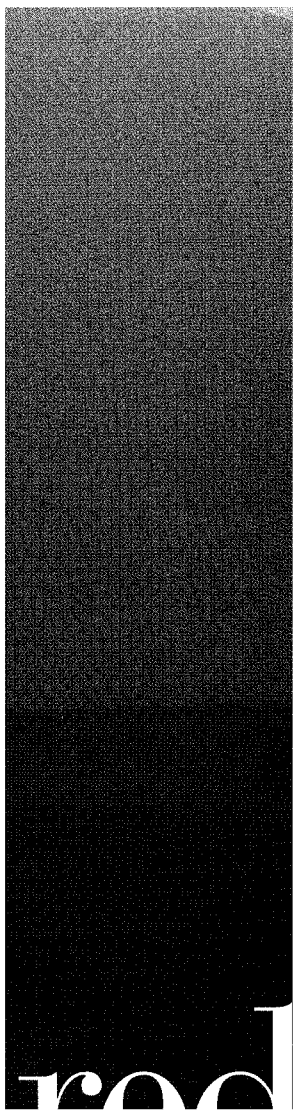

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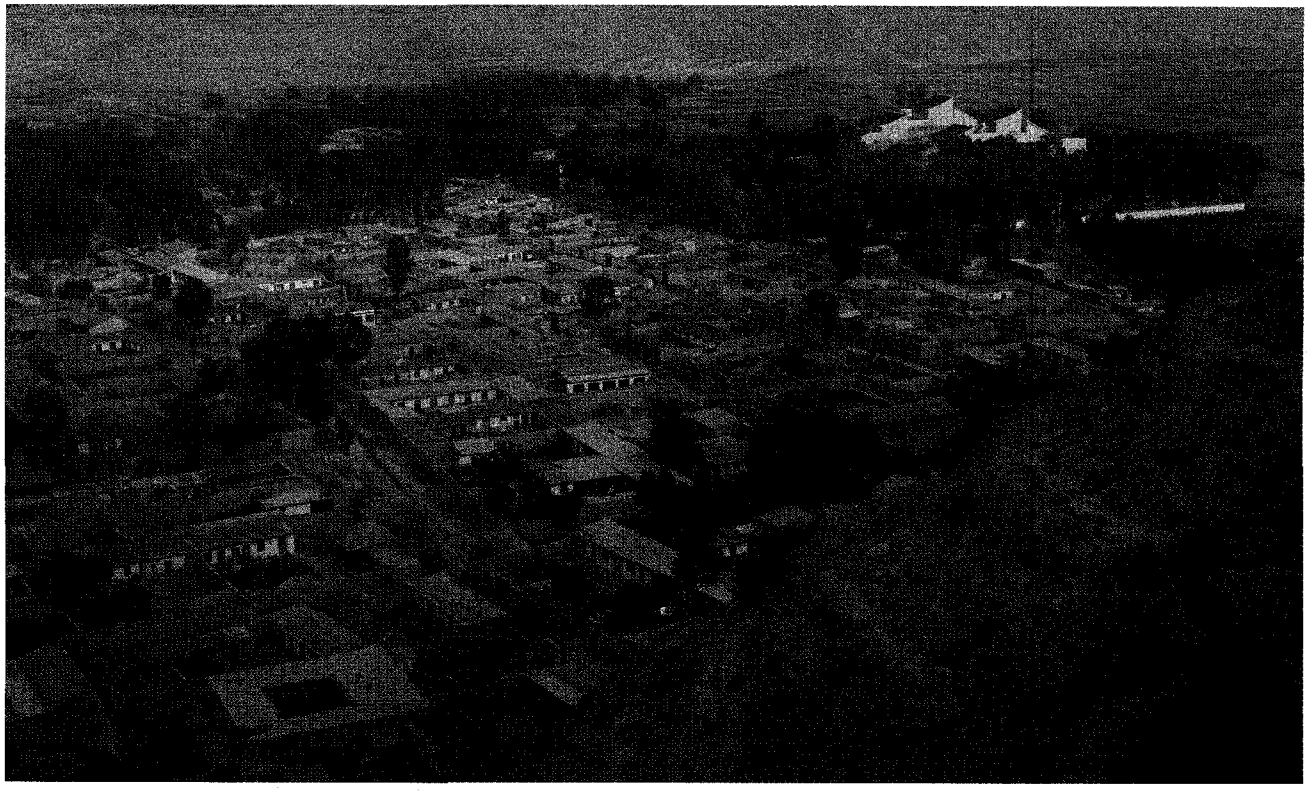

SUDDEN CHANGE: the Yellow Sheep River convention center, right, next to adobe village homes

country, as "the South" meant in America for a hundred years after the Civil War.

Only a quarter of China's population lives in the western provinces and "autonomous regions," including Tibet. But that is more than 300 million people, roughly the entire population of the United States, many of them trapped in a kind of subsistence economy hard to imagine from the perspective of even China's own major eastern cities. After trips to a number of these areas—Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai, Xinjiang, the western parts of Sichuan and Shaanxi—I was sobered as I have been by nothing else in the country.

If I were running a travel agency, I would skip the likes of Beijing and Shanghai and send foreign visitors out toward these western villages, where they would see aspects of China beyond its urban spectacle and manufacturing prowess. In China's most famous cities, tourists are surprised by the scale, speed, intensity, and ambition of the activity all around them. But seeing all this firsthand mainly gives a more detailed confirmation of the impression they already had. Even the poverty of the big cities, impossible to ignore and startling because it appears right next to the fanciest luxury projects, involves people who are connected to the modern world: for instance, migrant construction workers live very dangerous and oppressed lives, but they work on fancy high-rise office buildings and new freeway overpasses.

MORE ON THEATLANTIC.COM
For a slideshow of Yellow Sheep River, visit www.theatlantic.com/sheep.

But in the villages, people effectively live in a different century. Their families may exist on the cash equivalent of $10 or $15 per month. Their entire life experience may be encompassed within a radius of 10 or 20 miles. When my wife and I visited a high school in an ethnic Tibetan village in Gansu province, we were the first foreigners the students—or any of their teachers, or the principal—had ever seen outside of textbooks. At that school and others in the west, we talked with children who went to school in some years and didn't in others, depending on whether their families had sold enough crops to pay the public-school fees. This is not the China that most foreigners read about or experience on visits, but its isolation and poverty are important parts of any understanding of China.

To my taste, the arid western provinces are the most beautiful areas of China. The eastern seaboard is mainly flat, featureless, overdeveloped, and devastated. Much of the west is awe-inspiring to see. This is the austere beauty of the desert: limitless vistas, clear skies, dramatic topography, an unforgiving environment for life of any kind.

Several of the trips we took through western villages were in the company of a Taiwanese-born software expert in his early 60s named Kenny Lin, who is now engaged in the most touching and quixotic enterprise I have seen in China—one that my wife and I felt moved to support after seeing its effects in rural schools. During the year I've followed Lin, I've found his efforts both fascinating and significant, in this sense: They underscore the depth of the economic challenges today's mighty China still faces. And they suggest the power of a new

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TEACHING TECH: Liu Li helps 10-year-old Shi Xiaomeng at an "animation camp" held in Yellow Sheep River's convention center.

way of dealing with those challenges. This involves neither the government edicts that have guided the economy for decades nor the me-first capitalist vigor of recent years, but instead a deliberate use of market incentives and technological tools in what Kenny Lin calls an altruistic way.

To see what this means in 2008 requires going back more than 40 years, to Lin's friendship in Taiwan with his college classmate Sayling Wen.

In the summer of 1966, Lin and Wen started college in the electrical-engineering department of National Taiwan University, in Taipei. Lin's father was a doctor and politician; Wen's, an electrician who died when his son was young. Wen was smart and the most diligent among his group of friends. After graduation in 1970 and mandatory military service, he joined one of the small electronics companies then proliferating in Taiwan. Over the next quarter century, he grew very rich, as Taiwan went through an outsourcing and manufacturing boom like the one that more recently got under way in mainland China.

As the mainland Chinese economy opened in the 1990s, business opportunities, plus his own curiosity, led Wen to spend more and more time on the mainland. In 1992 his company, Inventec, built its first mainland factory, in Shanghai. Wen had long been a man of passions and pet projects. For instance, from the start of his career, he was convinced that the right English-teaching software could make it easy for Chinese speakers to learn English and, in his view, end their isolation from world discourse. (So far, no dice.) In 2000, he developed a new and very powerful passion: to save the poor people of western China.

During the 1990s, Wen had traveled incessantly through China's industrial areas. In the summer of 2000, he had his first exposure to the driest and perhaps most challenging of the western regions: Gansu province, in the windblown yellow-earth plateau on the edge of the Gobi Desert. At an economic conference in Gansu's capital, Lanzhou, he heard officials compare China's development of its western frontier to the development of the American West, a process that would unfold over many generations.

Wen strongly disagreed. He stood up to say that even a 50-year target was unacceptable. For one thing, it was too far off to fit into any business's investment plans. With the advantages of airplanes, telecommunications, and global trade, progress should be much faster. Moreover, the 300 million people living in the arid west were "like us, all children of the Yellow Emperor, sharing the same ancestral blood," yet still living in poverty. If China let them languish another 50 years, "their suffering would be unbearable."

He had a new idea: western China would have to become fully modernized—brought into parity with Shanghai and Beijing—by 2010. Soon he had written a manifesto called *Develop Western China in Ten Years*, which was published in English and Chinese, and he steered Inventec's money toward sites in the west. He also learned that he would have an unexpected ally: his old classmate Kenny Lin.

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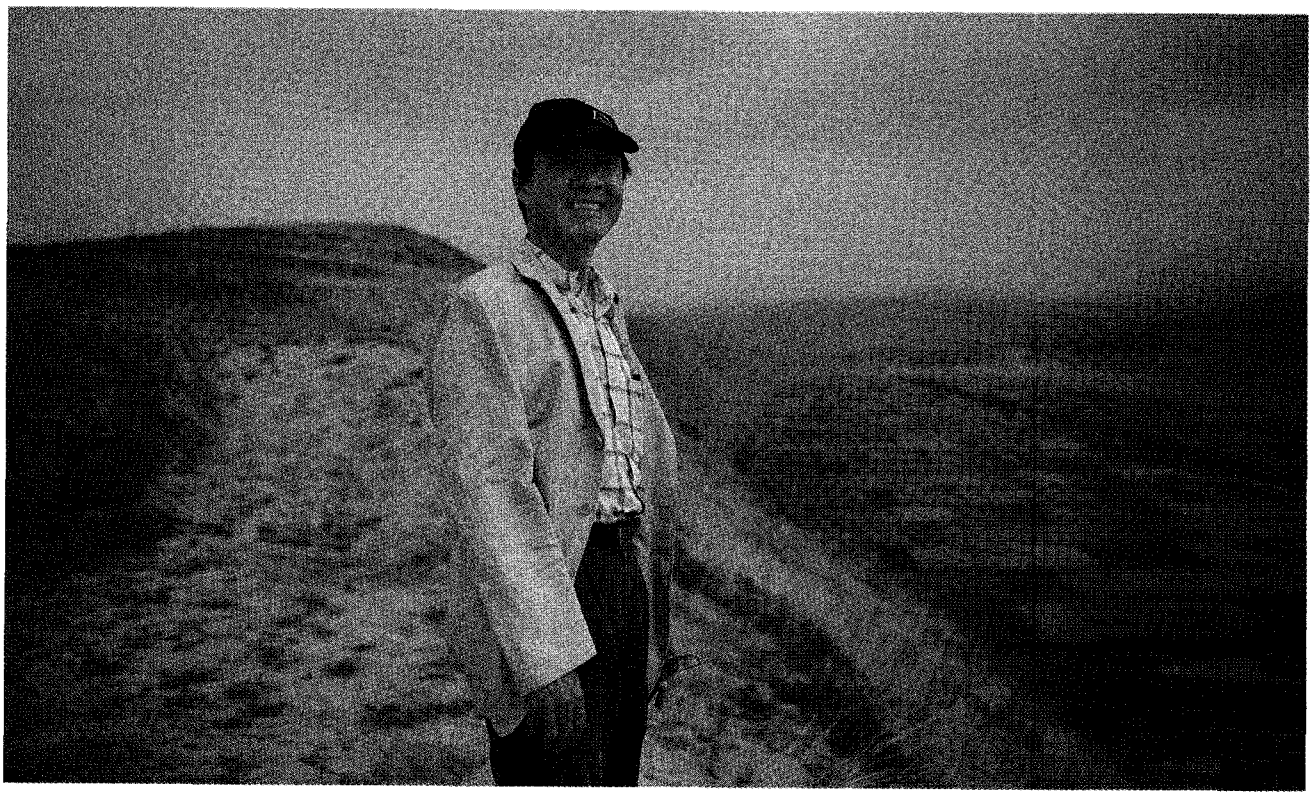

KENNY LIN, born in Taiwan and long a U.S. resident, found his calling in the rugged, rural west of China.

In the years after college in Taipei, Kenny Lin went to the United States, earned a doctorate, and had a successful 20-year run as an engineer, researcher, and manager, winding up at Bell Labs and NYNEX. He married a woman from Taiwan, became a U.S. citizen, and raised two children. But China's opening under Deng Xiaoping attracted him, and after investigating various possibilities, he left the United States and in 1993 started a software center in Tianjin, outside Beijing, for his friend Sayling Wen's Inventec company.

One of Lin's engineers in the Tianjin software facility, Peng Haina, had spent a year as a volunteer teacher in a remote, desolate village in Gansu province called Huang Yang Chuan, literally "Yellow Sheep River." It lay at the junction of two shallow streams in a gorge 8,000 feet above sea level. The village of several thousand people had two streets. Most families lived in mud-brick-walled courtyard buildings where their sheep and cattle also slept. Inside their homes, they kept warm in the frigid high-altitude winter by burning charcoal or animal dung in the lower part of large rectangular brick structures called *kangs*. They sat and slept on top.

Economically they survived by grazing sheep on already overgrazed, dry, and rapidly eroding hillsides, and by growing wheat and potatoes when there was enough rain. The people of Yellow Sheep River came into virtually no contact with the world beyond their little gorge, except when young men and women who had fled hundreds of miles to take factory jobs returned for a few days each year during the Chinese New Year holiday to see their hometown, and often the children they had left behind.

Peng encouraged his Inventec colleagues to donate books and computer equipment to the school and told Lin that he, too, should visit western China, which he had never seen. In late September 2000, Lin went to Yellow Sheep River. What he saw changed the direction of his life.

In a book recounting that visit, which he wrote during a two-week burst, Lin described the hardships of the life he had seen in the hinterland—and also a solution that had come to him. It was a solution in the same spirit that had already motivated his old classmate Wen, though at the time he had no idea of Wen's own interests.

The hardship that stunned him most was the powerlessness of rural people against brute natural misfortune. A bright and promising young girl had made it through elementary school—but then a drought dried up the crops, and her peasant parents pulled her out of school because they didn't have money for the fees. In an hour-long video documentary Lin made to accompany the book (available at YellowSheepRiver.com), he showed the peasant parents saying they mainly wanted to get the girl married off as soon as possible. (An uncle then gave her money for school.) Another boy was shown sobbing about the dim fate that awaited his younger sister, who had been pulled out of elementary school to save money and would remain uneducated like their parents. "Oh God, help these simple and innocent children out of the poverty, deliver them from the tortures of the lack of rain," Lin wrote.

His immediate impulse was direct charity. On his first visit, Lin pledged 2,500 RMB per month, about $365, to pay for

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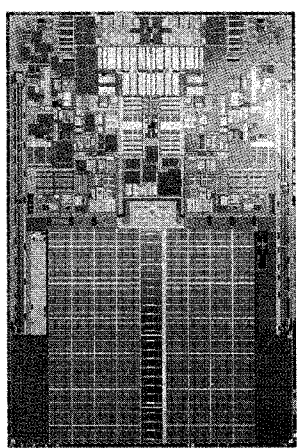
THE FUTURE JUST LOST ITS LEAD.



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meat in the school lunches and for fuel to boil drinking water. But he believed in "teach a man to fish"–type help rather than long-term charity, and so he conceived his scheme.

The villagers' fundamental problem was their isolation. The Internet could solve that! Lin's branch of Inventec could give more computers and software to the school. It could work with the local government to bring in a broadband line and set up a computer center that everyone in the village could use. The students could take courses far beyond the range offered by their impoverished school. They could communicate with people they had not known all their lives. The local farmers could use the Internet to learn about the weather and market conditions. Local craftsmen could offer items for sale to distant customers. Working-age people could look for good factory jobs elsewhere. "The shackles that had bound their spirits had been taken off," Lin wrote after he had, within a few weeks of his first visit (things happen fast in China), established the computer center, declared Yellow Sheep River an "Internet village," and created the Yellow Sheep River Web site.

It was just after his momentous first trip into the mountains that Lin saw Sayling Wen again. The year 2000 was the 30th anniversary of their college graduation, and Wen sent a note to his classmates saying that he was now so rich, he'd throw a celebration in Shanghai for the entire class and their families at Christmastime and pay their way. (His choice of Shanghai for a reunion of Taiwanese alums is an indication of the near-total integration of the mainland and Taiwanese economies.) On Christmas Day, he overheard Kenny Lin say that Yellow Sheep River now gave purpose to his life. Neither man had known about the other's recent interest in western China. Both had converted to Christianity, and both thought of helping western China partly as a spiritual obligation.

Wen told Lin about his vision of parity with the big cities within 10 years for these destitute areas and said that the "Internet village" was the model he had been looking for, since it could leapfrog the long process of industrialization and bring villagers directly into the telecommunications age.

Very soon, Wen had founded and funded a new company and put Lin in charge. Its name in English is "Town and Talent Technologies." Everything about it reflected Wen's love for the grand gesture. Had Lin brought the Internet to one village? It should come to a thousand villages. Might it cost $50,000 to equip, operate, and maintain each village's new computer center? Then Wen should commit $50 million, to cover all thousand villages.

Plus an extra $4 million, for what Wen saw as the crowning touch: a five-star luxury conference center in Yellow Sheep River itself, kind of an Aspen or Jackson Hole without the rich people. There Chinese visitors from the rich eastern cities could see how their countrymen lived, and so could visitors from around the world. Wen kept adding new specs and features to the resort. A conference room with special acoustic tile and high-end video projectors. A swimming pool with the latest "antiwave" design to prevent needless ripples, plus a gym. Naturally, broadband in all the rooms.

Wen used his connections and pull to interest governmental and industrial groups in the project, and he kept encouraging and funding Lin's work. Then he dropped dead.

In December 2003, as Town and Talent was setting up Internet projects at more than 50 western schools and as the external structure of the resort was being finished, Sayling Wen suddenly suffered a stroke. He'd always been overweight—standing behind him in line for mandatory fitness training back in their first week of college, Kenny Lin had been startled to see Wen weigh in at 99 kilos, 218 pounds, and strain valiantly but be unable to complete a single pull-up. (Lin, in contrast, was and is a physical-fitness fanatic.) But Wen had seemed vigorous and healthy. He was taken to the hospital and within three days had died, at age 55.

Kenny Lin was devastated for his friend, and he was also in trouble. Wen had given him only $1.2 million of the promised $4 million total for the resort. "I had 400 construction workers ready to start on the interior," he told me. "No one knew where the other $2.8 million was." Wen had apparently told no one else in the company about his commitment. Lin stalled the workers, telling them that the hotel might become a school. He feared a riot if they knew that the whole project was at risk. Finally, in March 2004, after three months of Lin's pressure and pleading, one of Sayling Wen's brothers agreed to provide the missing $2.8 million.

By the end of 2004 the conference center was done, and officials from around China attended a grand-opening ceremony. "But our original business model was lots of conferences, and Mr. Wen, with his connections, was the central part of that model," Kenny Lin told me. "Now there is no one to invite the people he could bring."

> Lin knew that the mountainous area would appeal to Western hikers and mountain bikers. The highland scenery is breathtaking, like Wyoming or the Canadian Rockies.

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Right now a lot of Americans are struggling. People are worried about the future, not just for themselves, but also for their children and grandchildren. They sense that the American Dream is coming apart at the seams. And for good reason.

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Today there is new hope and renewed determination. Americans have rallied around this issue and are demanding solutions for accessible, affordable, quality health care.

So why can't we move forward? Because we are caught up in finger pointing, apathy and political paralysis.

We can solve these problems by getting involved and pushing our elected officials toward change. We can hold the candidates accountable for their promises of health care reform and make it a priority in the next administration and the next Congress. Let's be ready.

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ON THE STREETS in Yellow Sheep River, farmers often play Chinese chess, or *xiangqi*, in the time between planting and harvest.

Lin told me this in the summer of 2007, as my wife and I walked along the echoing marble floors of the conference center, beneath a larger-than-life-sized portrait of Sayling Wen. We had heard about Yellow Sheep River, which has been well publicized in China, and had gotten in touch with Lin through mutual friends. In the 145-room resort, we appeared to be the only paying guests (the list price is about $100 a night). A full, uniformed staff was on hand—to welcome us to the breakfast buffet, to hand us towels at the pool and exercise room, to greet us when we went in and out the front door.

I have seen deserted resort-palaces before—for example, a ghostly one in the Ilocos area of northern Luzon, which Ferdinand Marcos had built strictly for his daughter's wedding and which stayed open, empty, for years after he was deposed. But this was different, in retaining an air of hopefulness rather than sheer decadence. And hopeful is how I feel about the several legacies of Sayling Wen's vision for western China.

The resort itself is of course the most visible of these legacies. When I run my travel agency, I will send every foreign group there I can. By international standards, it is no longer super-luxurious. But for foreigners it is comfortable, which cannot be said of many other places where outsiders are a two-minute walk away from village life. Unlike similar "comfortable" lodgings in places like Haiti or West Africa, it creates little sense of surviving behind barricades in a gilded cage. The hotel and conference center are in the middle of ordinary peasant fields but not besieged by desperate local crowds. As in much of China, including some areas of the west, my wife and I walked through the region chatting with farmers and children in basic Mandarin without causing too much of a stir.

Kenny Lin, who turned over management of the resort to a colleague in 2005, was aiming for a high-end international crowd of visitors. He knew that the surrounding mountainous area would appeal to Western hikers, mountain bikers, and horse-riders. The highland scenery is breathtaking, like Wyoming or the Canadian Rockies, with numerous white yaks in place of bison or bears. (Breathtaking literally, too. While my wife rode horses among the yaks with Lin, I foolishly attempted to run along a path in the same highland meadow, only to stop in my tracks 10 seconds later. It turns out that the meadow is at an elevation of 11,000 feet.) The resort's new manager has decided that the domestic Chinese tourist and conference business, a very rapidly growing market, offers the best prospects, and reportedly has booked enough of them to keep the business running.

A second legacy of Sayling Wen is the Town and Talent company, with its plan to bring the power of the Internet to isolated villages. The strategy behind that plan has also changed significantly since Lin's first trip to Yellow Sheep River, eight years ago. Then, he thought the Internet could best help the young people of Gansu by helping them move away. They could learn what they needed to know to take factory jobs, and then be matched with big employers in the big cities. "Outsourcing labor to factories was a big economic success," Lin says, "but ethically, we couldn't be responsible for what happened to the kids. They were country children. They didn't know how to

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handle money in the big cities. They didn't know how to make friends or even cross streets."

Now Town and Talent's strategy is the reverse. It still wants to help children leave subsistence farms, on land that was barely farmable even before the drought and has been overused to the point of exhaustion. But instead of speeding their departure to the east and further straining family and social ties, it is trying to use the Internet to create new jobs in western China's cities. To oversimplify, the plan has similarities to India's success in creating call-center and tech-support jobs in Bangalore and Hyderabad, except here the idea is to attract jobs that might otherwise end up in Shanghai, Hangzhou, or some other booming eastern Chinese city. Town and Talent has set up programs in more than 150 schools in western China to train students in using computers (which it donates) and the Internet, so they will have a better chance of holding tech jobs or starting companies of their own.

The final legacy is outright philanthropy, the current version of Sayling Wen's obviously impossible dream of modernizing the west within 10 years. The Town and Talent company devotes 10 percent of its efforts to a project whose English name is "West China Story" and whose goal is to connect students in remote villages with the outside world.

In this program, middle-school and high-school students in distant areas apply for a kind of work-study grant. The standard amount, about $115, covers most of their yearly school expenses and so can keep them enrolled even when times are bad. (In many of the schools I've seen, the students sleep in cramped concrete dorm rooms on weeknights, because their homes are too far away for daily travel by bus or on foot. Part of the fee is to cover their food at school.) In exchange they must, essentially, become bloggers. At least 10 times per year, they are required to research, write, illustrate, and post on the Web a report on some aspect of their lives in the countryside. The idea is to remind them that they are earning their way and not being given a favor, while at the same time teaching them modern Web-site-design skills. In addition, teams of students put up elaborate multipage Web sites—on the prospects for wind turbines in perpetually gusty western areas, on the history of irrigation systems in the Yellow River basin of Ningxia—some of which have won prizes in international high-school "cyber-fairs."

The essays are available at WestChinaStory.com; they are in Chinese, but the students correspond with site visitors in simple English as part of their training. Many of the pictures are eloquent, regardless of language. (Town and Talent gives each school one digital camera, which the students share.) One middle-school student writes about the "moment of joy" when the family wheat crop is ready for harvest. A high-school boy tells about how great it was when his school got a basketball to play with outside. Another, about learning Tibetan dance. Another, what is hard but satisfying about herding sheep. It might sound maudlin, but having met some of these children, I take their accounts as alive, hopeful, human.

Some 2,200 rural students now earn their keep through this kind of blogging, supported by half a million dollars in donations mainly from Taiwan, Hong Kong, the United States, and a few businesses in mainland China. My wife and I signed up to "hire" a number of blogging students from the school that welcomed us. (On the site, you can not only see all of the students' essays in Chinese and their pictures but also choose students to sponsor at 800 RMB, or about $115, per year.) I'd like to know what becomes of them.

"The children in these villages have so many disadvantages," Ted Wen, Sayling's son, told me when I met him in Taipei. "They do not have a fair chance." For instance: Chinese universities reverse the logic of U.S. affirmative-action programs. Rich and poor students alike take the *gaokao*, the nationwide admissions test. But to get into the famous, career-making universities, a poor student from the hinterland must score *higher* than a rich kid from an elite urban school. (This is the practical effect of a system whose stated bias is in favor of students from each university's own geographical area, and where the best universities are in the biggest, richest cities.)

Town and Talent wants to help children leave subsistence farms—but instead of speeding their departure to the east, it is trying to use the Internet to create new jobs in the west.

Ted Wen is a suave figure in his early 30s who studied computer science in Japan and California before returning to Taiwan after his father's death to "get involved in my father's unfinished business," as he wrote to me in an e-mail. He said that his father's vision for western China was in part purely practical: if Taiwanese businesses did good things for mainland China, maybe people on the mainland would look favorably on Taiwan. But it also had a moral core. "I think it was important to my father to give children in the west a fairer chance to compete."

That effort might be doomed. The children might still have no hope. The west of China may still be poor 10 years from now, and a hundred. But in a big, bustling country where many people are thinking mainly about what's profitable, it's worth noticing the ones who are thinking about what's fair.

James Fallows is an *Atlantic* national correspondent; his blog is at jamesfallows.theatlantic.com.

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Casanova's first orgasm, Hitler's famous mustache, Bob Hope's last jokes: for every thing, there is a season. Herewith a compilation of great moments in precocity, endurance, and procrastination, organized instructively by age

ILLUSTRATIONS AND TEXT BY ERIC HANSON

Innocence and Experience

1 Keith Richards is evacuated from suburban London to escape German buzz bombs, 1944.

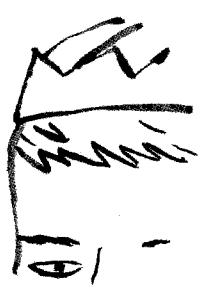
3 Sigmund Freud sees his mother naked, 1859.

6 Alfred Hitchcock's father sends him down to the police station with a note instructing the officer in charge to lock him in a cell for five minutes, circa 1905.

9 Proust suffers his first asthma attack, circa 1881.

10 Martin Luther King Jr. sings in a boys choir at the premiere of *Gone With the Wind* in Atlanta, 1939.

11 Giacomo Casanova experiences his first orgasm, 1736.



12 Joan of Arc begins to hear voices, 1424.
Adolf Hitler attends a performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, 1901.

13 Spanky McFarland retires from *Our Gang*, 1942.
William F. Buckley Jr. takes up sailing, 1939.

14 Marie Antoinette is packed off to be married to the heir to the throne of France, 1770. She is stripped naked and carefully inspected at the French border.

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15 After twirling lassos in Disney's Frontierland and pricing hats in Adventureland, Steve Martin gets a job doing magic tricks in Fantasyland, 1960.

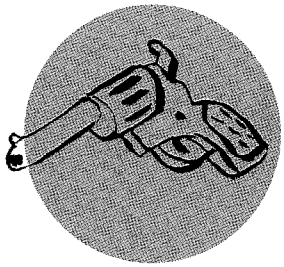
16 Allen Stewart Konigsberg changes his name to Woody Allen. He sees his first Bergman film, *Summer With Monika*, 1952.

17 Kurt Cobain leaves home and finds work as a hotel cleaner but is fired for sleeping in the rooms, 1984.

19 Zsa Zsa Gabor is chosen to be Miss Hungary, 1936.
Joan of Arc is burned at the stake, 1431.

20 Clyde Barrow meets Bonnie Parker, 1930.

21 Alice Waters visits France for the first time, 1965.



22 Dwight Eisenhower misses a crucial tackle on Jim Thorpe, and the Carlisle Indians go on to defeat Army, 27–6. Before the game, Carlisle coach Pop Warner told his players to remember Wounded Knee, 1912.

23 Neil Young joins Stephen Stills, David Crosby, and Graham Nash to form Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, 1969.

24 Newlywed Sylvia Plath consults a Ouija board with her husband, Ted Hughes, 1956.
Bob Dylan goes electric on the first side of his album *Bringing It All Back Home*, and is booed at the Newport Folk Festival, 1965.

25 Anne Boleyn marries Henry VIII, 1533.

26 Ho Chi Minh is working as a pastry cook at the Carlton Hotel in London, circa 1916.

27 Alice Waters opens a restaurant called Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California, 1971.

28 Thomas Lanier Williams shuttles from New Orleans to California, Missouri, and New York; along the way, he adopts his college nickname of Tennessee, 1939.

30 Adolf Hitler grows his famous mustache, 1919.
Jerry Lewis parts ways with Dean Martin at the end of their 10th-anniversary show at the Copacabana, 1956.

31 Charles Schulz gives Linus a security blanket, 1954.

32 Lizzie Borden is found not guilty of giving her stepmother and father 40 and 41 whacks, respectively, 1893.

33 Gertrude Stein meets Alice B. Toklas, 1907.

34 Sigmund Freud is given a couch by a grateful patient, circa 1890.
Charles Manson buys a copy of the Beatles' *White Album*, 1968.

35 In the midst of the Depression, Walt Disney spends a million and a half dollars to make a feature-length cartoon about a young woman living with seven men, 1937.

36 Einstein completes his General Theory of Relativity, 1915.
Marilyn Monroe dies in her Brentwood, California, home of an overdose of barbiturates, 1962.
Diana, Princess of Wales, dies in a car accident in Paris, 1997.

37 Coco Chanel introduces Chanel No. 5 perfume, 1921.
Marie Antoinette is guillotined, 1793.

38 For a television special, broadcast from Hawaii, Elvis Presley commissions a special patriotic caped jumpsuit with a sequined eagle, 1973.

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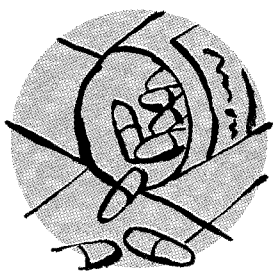
39 Ian Fleming vacations in Jamaica with his mistress, 1948. While there he purchases a copy of *Birds of the West Indies*, by the ornithologist James Bond.

40 John Lennon and Yoko Ono have a session with *Rolling Stone* photographer Annie Leibowitz. The most famous image is of John nude and in the fetal position embracing Yoko, who is fully clothed. That evening, Lennon is shot dead by a deranged fan, 1980.
Winston Churchill is forced out of the Admiralty after the disastrous Dardanelles campaign, 1915. He retreats to the country and takes up painting.

41 Columbus sails the ocean blue, 1492.

42 Elvis Presley dies on the floor of his bathroom, 1977.



44 Ronald Reagan co-hosts live coast-to-coast TV coverage of the opening day at Disneyland, 1955.

45 John F. Kennedy is serenaded by Marilyn Monroe at a large birthday party held at Madison Square Garden, 1962.
Napoleon is defeated at Waterloo, 1815.

47 White House sage Henry Kissinger is dating Jill St. John, 1970. The red-haired soon-to-be Bond girl is reputed to have an IQ of 162.

48 Paul Newman's name turns up on President Nixon's secret enemies list, 1973.
Mick Jagger becomes a grandfather, 1992.

50 Former '60s radical Jerry Rubin is organizing networking seminars on Wall Street, 1988.

51 Ronald Reagan becomes a Republican, 1962.

53 Walt Disney opens a theme park in California, 1955. *The Graduate* soundtrack asks: "Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio?" The retired ballplayer is living quietly in the Bay Area and coaching for the Oakland A's, 1968.

54 Christopher Columbus dies in Spain, 1506. A year after his death, a German mapmaker names the New World after somebody else.

56 The now-nearly-forgotten Victor Fleming directs both *Gone With the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939.

57 Richard Nixon receives the velvet-suited Elvis Presley in the White House, 1970.

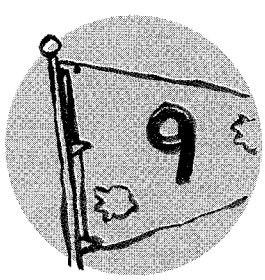
58 Abraham Zapruder makes a keepsake film of John F. Kennedy's motorcade as it passes the book depository in Dallas, Texas, 1963.

61 Orson Welles performs card tricks on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, 1976.

62 Aristotle Onassis marries 39-year-old Jackie Kennedy, 1968.

63 Walt Disney secretly acquires land from orange growers in central Florida, 1964.

65 Jack Welch retires after 20 years as chairman and CEO of General Electric, taking with him a retirement package paying for telephone and computer service at his five homes; flowers, food, wine, and waitstaff when he's in New York; memberships at three country clubs; Red Sox, Yankees, and Knicks tickets; a box at the Metropolitan Opera; very nice seats at Wimbledon, the French Open, and the U.S. Open tennis tournaments; and dry cleaning, for the rest of his life, 2001.



66 Hunter S. Thompson invents "shotgun golf" at Owl Farm, in Woody Creek, Colorado, 2004.

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67 As a guest on *The Dick Cavett Show* on PBS, Mary McCarthy says that her fellow writer Lillian Hellman is overrated, and then says, "Every word she writes is a lie, including *and* and *the*," 1979.

70 Long-range photos of a still-svelte, seminude Greta Garbo sunning herself appear in *People* magazine, 1976.
Robert Frost gets the young Truman Capote fired from his job at *The New Yorker* after he walks out of one of Frost's poetry readings, 1944.

72 On his birthday, Albert Einstein has his picture taken while he sticks his tongue out, 1951.
Mao Zedong launches the Cultural Revolution, 1966.

75 George Plimpton appears as a corrupt spelling-bee emcee in episode 303 of *The Simpsons*, 2003.

77 Retired senator and former astronaut John Glenn becomes the oldest man to orbit Earth, 1998.
After exhibiting some of her paintings at Thomas's Drugstore in Hoosick Falls, N.Y., Grandma Moses is discovered by art collector Louis Caldor, 1938.

80 Poet Marianne Moore throws out the first pitch at the Yankees' season opener, 1968.

84 Dame Agatha Christie complains that Miss Marple is nothing like Margaret Rutherford, who portrays her in the film versions of Christie's novels, 1974.

86 Robert Frost recites his poem "The Gift Outright" at John F. Kennedy's inauguration, 1961.

87 Sir John Gielgud plays his first nude scene, in the film *Prospero's Books*, 1991.

88 Walter Cronkite maintains an office and a staff of four at CBS headquarters in New York. He has a consulting contract with the network, but is rarely consulted. He thinks about writing a blog, 2005.

89 Julia Child decides to give her Cambridge, Massachusetts, kitchen to the Smithsonian, 2001.

90 John D. Rockefeller Sr. watches as half of the family fortune is lost in the stock-market crash of 1929. But there's still enough Rockefeller money to found the Museum of Modern Art, build Rockefeller Center, restore colonial Williamsburg, and buy enough of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, for a national park.

91 On his deathbed, W. Somerset Maugham asks a friend to reassure him that there is no afterlife, 1965.

93 After having four car accidents in a month, George Burns hires a chauffeur, 1989.

94 Bandleader Artie Shaw dies, 2004. His obituary in *The New York Times* bears the byline of a reporter who died in 2002.

95 Titian writes a letter to Phillip II of Spain, to bug him about a portrait that hasn't been paid for, 1571.

96 Philip Johnson is still seen occasionally at Table No. 32 at the Four Seasons, the ground-floor restaurant located in the Seagram Building, 2002. He designed the building with Mies van der Rohe.

98 Rin Tin Tin dies at his home in Los Angeles, 1932. In human years he was 14.

99 Bob Hope has amassed an 85,000-page joke file, digitally scanned and broken down into categories, which he stores in file cabinets in a theft- and fire-proof walk-in vault in the office next to his North Hollywood home, 2002.

100 Dr. Albert Hofmann, the inventor of LSD, celebrates his 100th birthday, 2006.

Eric Hanson is an illustrator and the author of the recently published *A Book of Ages: An Eccentric Miscellany of Great Moments in the Lives of the Famous and Infamous, Ages 1 to 100* (Harmony Books), from which this has been adapted.

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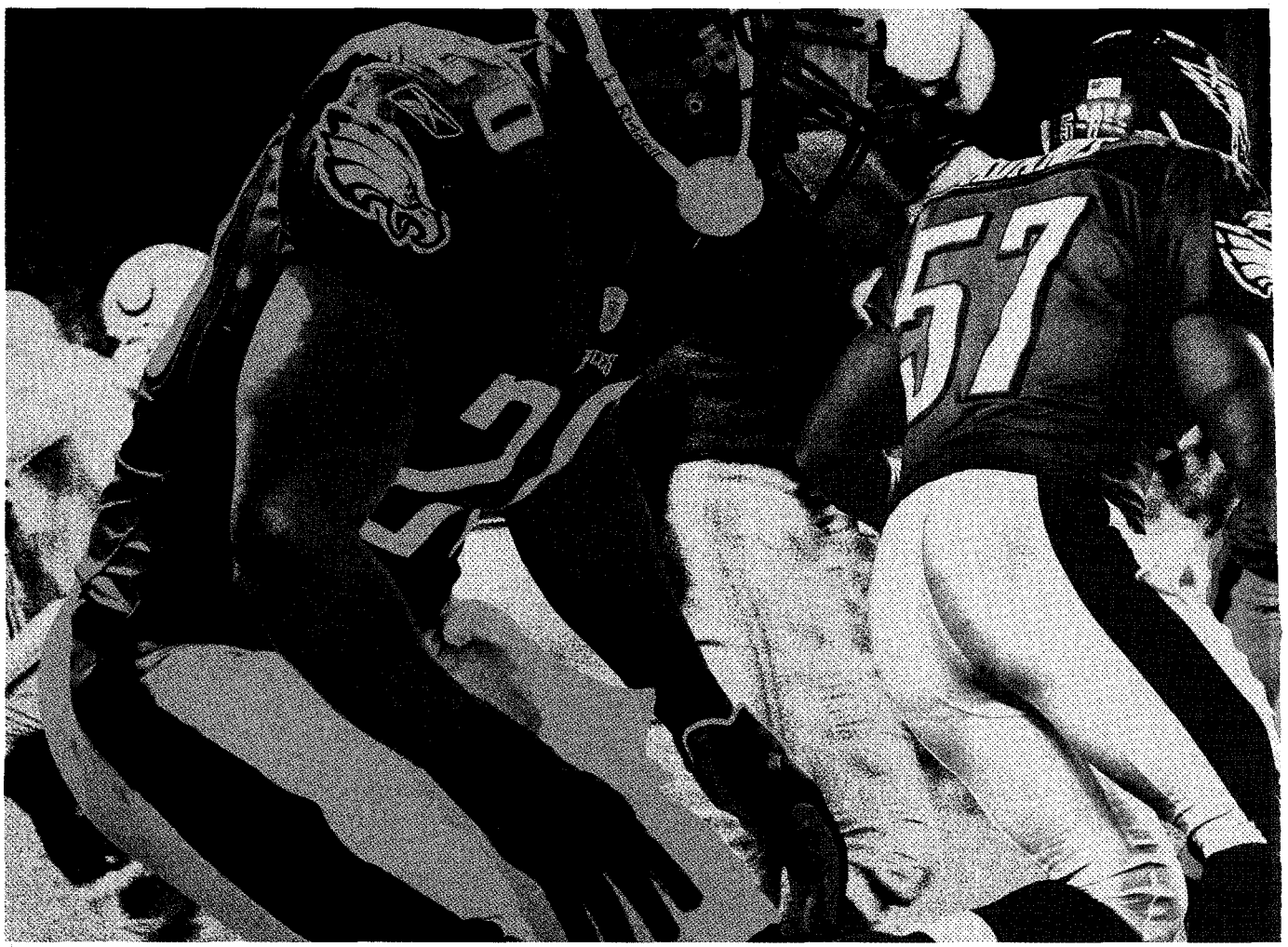

How the greatest game in football history looks 50 years later, through the eyes of a modern NFL head coach

Distant Replay

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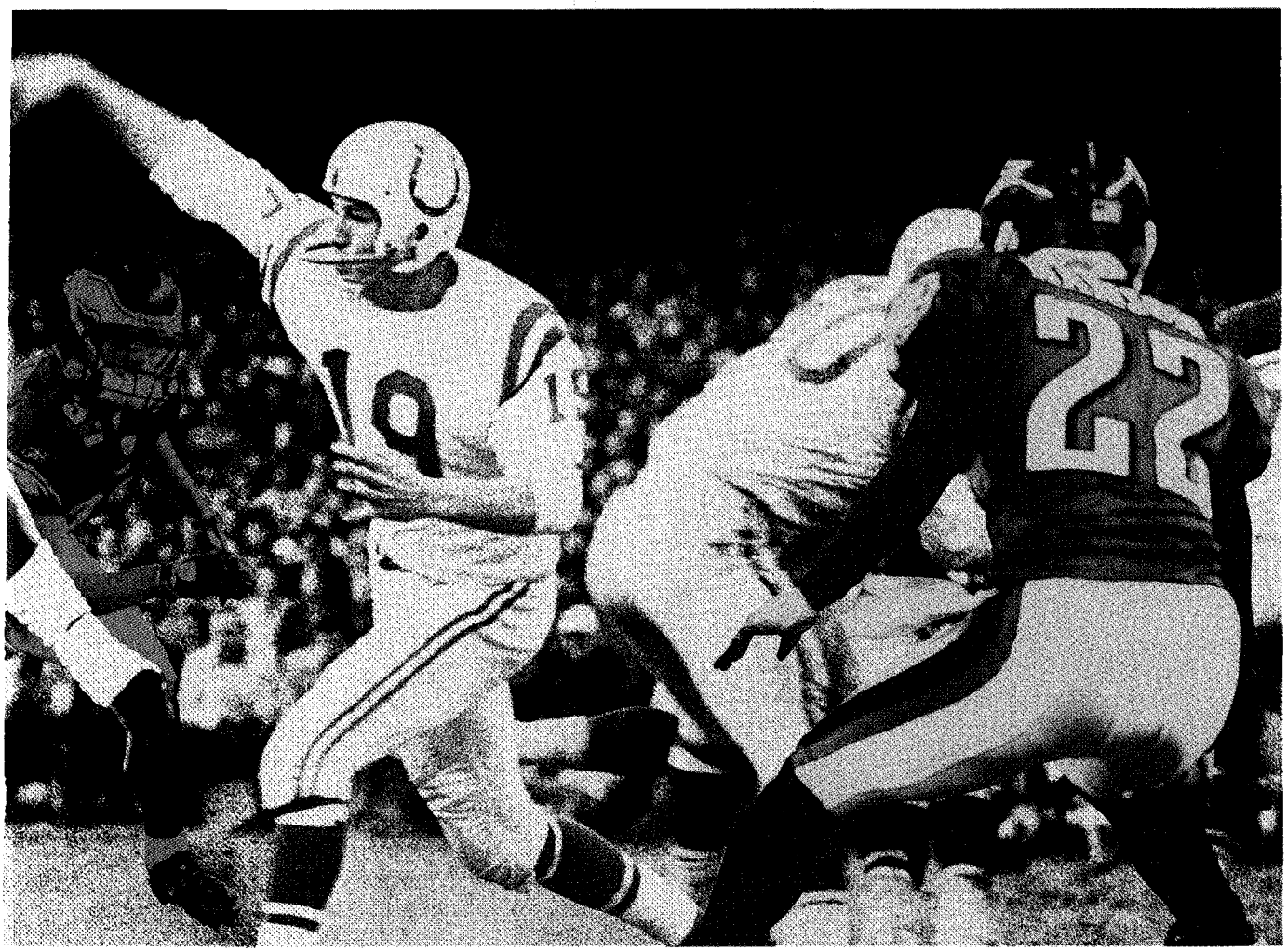

BY MARK BOWDEN

Illustration by Sean McCabe

WATCHING GAME FILM with Andy Reid, head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles, can make you woozy. He lounges behind the wide desk in his office, feet up, using a wireless control to freeze the image of a play on a screen at the opposite end of the room, and then starts rolling it forward and backward, forward and back, first the whole play and then only portions of it, forward and back, forward and back, until he has pieced all the moving parts together.

Reid is a very big man, a former collegiate offensive lineman, and when I met him last spring, he was in full off-season mode: tan, relaxed, and draped in a colorful Hawaiian silk shirt large enough to display the entire Amazon rain forest. Reid

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was coming off another winning year—the Eagles had made it to the second round of the postseason playoffs just months earlier—and he was already well into his preparations for the next season. Pro football is a year-round occupation these days, so he was doing me a favor by agreeing to help me with research for my book, *The Best Game Ever*, an account of the celebrated 1958 NFL championship game between the Baltimore Colts and the New York Giants.

I've written about football in the past, but I am by no means an expert, so I had gone looking for a pro coach to help me break down film of the famous game. I live just outside Philadelphia and once covered the Eagles for the local newspaper, so I phoned Derek Boyko, the team's affable public-relations director. Boyko warned me that the club's assistant coaches were probably too busy, but he nevertheless agreed to ask around. He called back to say that all of the coaches, curious about the way the game was played before most of them were born, had expressed an interest. "But they need permission from Andy," he said. "I'll ask him when he comes back from leave in a few weeks."

Boyko called me weeks later to say, "Andy wants to do it."

It seemed odd at first for a pro coach to have never seen film of this historic game—a little like finding a doctor of English literature who had never read *Macbeth*. But success in pro football, as in any intensely competitive, constantly evolving arena, depends primarily on current intelligence: What did my opponent last do against me? What did he do last week? A pro coach is not inclined to search for what he needs in old black-and-white film. History is ... well, *history*.

But no craftsman or professional can be completely uninterested in seeing how he measures up against past standards of excellence. How good was the game then? How capable were the players? How clever were the coaches and schemes?

The game in question defined excellence for an era. It pitted the best defense in the NFL, the Giants, against the best offense, the Colts, playing for all the marbles. It featured 17 future NFL Hall of Fame players, coaches, and owners. On the field were great athletes like Johnny Unitas, Raymond Berry, Lenny Moore, Gino Marchetti, Frank Gifford, Andy Robustelli, Emlen Tunnell, Rosey Grier, and Sam Huff. Coaching on the sidelines were Vince Lombardi and Tom Landry for the Giants, and for the Colts, Weeb Ewbank, the only pro coach who ever took teams from two different leagues (the NFL and the AFL) to national championships.

MORE ON THEATLANTIC.COM
For an interview with Mark Bowden about football, Andy Reid, and his book *The Best Game Ever*, visit www.theatlantic.com/football.

Reid was born in the year this game was played, and one reason he had never seen it is that the TV broadcast has been lost. But for serious study, I had wrested something even better from the archives of NFL Films: the grainy, monochrome "coaches' film" of the game, soundless footage shot from the sidelines high over midfield, with all the time-outs, huddles, and game breaks edited out.

Instant analysis envelops pro football like a cloud, but with most plays there is no way to tell what really happened and why without a careful, slow-motion dissection of the film. Reid is one of this craft's most successful practitioners. Even among pro coaches, he is notable for toting thick binders filled with notes and plans, and for fielding highly complex systems on both sides of the ball. Earlier in his career, he was quarterbacks coach for the Green Bay Packers, grooming Brett Favre and helping that team to a Super Bowl championship in 1997. His tenure in Philadelphia has been the most successful of any coach's in the team's long history: starting in 2001, he led the Eagles to four consecutive National Football Conference championship games and a Super Bowl—although, much to the consternation of long-suffering Eagles fans, he has yet to bring the Lombardi Trophy home to Philadelphia.

We watched the game in his office in the Eagles' training complex, just a few blocks from Lincoln Financial Field, where they play. When I covered the team in the early 1990s, the Eagles' offices, locker room, and workout facilities were housed in a few cramped, dark, damp rooms in the basement of the now-demolished Veterans Stadium. Today the team, whose worth is estimated at more than $1 billion, is housed at a state-of-the-art facility that sprawls over an area as large as a college campus.

"Okay," he'd say, when he had examined a play from snap to tackle, "here's what happened." Then out would pour a detailed explication: what the offense was trying to do, how the defense was trying to stop it, the techniques (good and bad) of the various key players, the historical roots of the formations and the play's design, and ultimately why it worked or failed, and who was responsible, either way. The wealth of information Reid gleaned from a single play reminded me of the way Patrick O'Brian's 19th-century naval hero, Jack Aubrey, eyeballing an enemy ship during a sea chase, could read from the play of its sails and the disposition of its crew the experience, intentions, strengths, and weaknesses of his opponent.

Reid's insight told on the first offensive play of the game. Colts coach Weeb Ewbank had designed a trick play, so secret that in his pregame meeting with his team in the visiting locker room at Yankee Stadium, he had *mouthed* the play call to them, fearful that the room was bugged. Observing the opening formation, Reid noted with surprise that all but one of the Colts linemen were positioned to the left of center Buzz Nutter. "This is a completely unbalanced formation," he told me. "You can't even do that today." The rules would no longer permit it: "You have to have *some* guys on the line of scrimmage." In the backfield, fullback Alan "The Horse" Ameche, a Heisman Trophy winner at the University of Wisconsin, was lined up behind quarterback Johnny Unitas; right halfback Lenny Moore was three steps to Ameche's right; and left halfback L. G. Dupre was split far out to the left side of the backfield.

Unitas didn't give the Giants a chance to set up in a recognizable defensive formation, even if they had one for such a

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bizarre look. He bent over, and Nutter immediately snapped the ball. Moore took the handoff—and was tackled for a loss.

"So they came out with a trick play in mind, and it really wasn't all that good," Reid said, chuckling. The main reason the play failed, he pointed out, was a missed block by Dupre, a speedy back whose initials, which stood for Louis George, had earned him the nickname "Long Gone." While Moore took the handoff from Unitas and followed Ameche around the left side of the Colts line, Dupre's job was to race forward and hit Harland Svare, the Giants' right-side linebacker, taking him out of the play. But the film tells the tale: "He didn't get the crack [block] right here," said Reid, using a red laser to point at Svare dodging Dupre, "and he kind of screws the play up." Svare races into the backfield, forcing Moore to step in front of Ameche, his blocker; the two briefly collide, and then as Moore tries to recover and race to the outside, he is pulled down for the loss.

"And then, the fullback forgot the snap count," Reid said, rolling the play back to the beginning again. Sure enough, on the snap of the ball, Ameche remains in a set position until Moore actually takes the ball from Unitas. "He forgot that it was a quick count ... That's that Wisconsin education right there."

by taking short stutter-steps backward, ready to bolt in either direction and avoiding the crossover step, a potentially costly mistake that can offer a receiver the split-second advantage he needs to break away.

Basic positioning along the line of scrimmage has changed as well. A few plays in, Reid noted that the Giants defensive tackles, Dick Modzelewski and Rosey Grier, were "flexed back off the ball"—that is, set up more than a yard away from the Colts linemen. "That's probably for the run game," Reid said, explaining that by hanging back from the line of scrimmage, the defenders could get a better look at the direction of the play before attacking.

I asked, "Why wouldn't you do that today?"

"Well, you give those big guys a head start on you," Reid said. "At that time I would imagine that the linemen were fairly equal athletically, and now the offensive linemen are so big and the defensive linemen are relatively smaller." If you're a defender today, he went on, and you spot a 300-plus-pound blocker a two-step running start, he'll knock you "right on your ass."

Reid surmised correctly. I checked the average weight of the starting offensive and defensive linemen in the '58 game: the Colts' offensive front five weighed an average of 243 pounds,

It seemed odd at first for a pro coach to have never seen film of this historic game—a little like finding a literature scholar who had never read *Macbeth*.

I told Reid that I had listened to the NBC radio broadcast, and had been struck by how much more quickly the game moved then than it does today. Breaks between plays and possessions are longer and more frequent now, to allow for more commercials, and the use of video replay to reexamine contested calls by the referees causes still more delays. Modern coaches use these gaps in the action for analysis, for sideline conferences and hand signals, or, in the case of the quarterback, for giving instructions over a direct radio link to his helmet. In 1958, the game, once started, was primarily in the hands of the players. Unitas called his own plays. Defensive field captains like the Giants' Sam Huff were on-field tacticians. The game was faster and simpler.

It also lacked many of the refined mechanical and tactical innovations that are commonplace in modern football. For instance, Reid was surprised to note that wide receivers assumed a three-point stance before the snap of the ball—today they stand upright, which allows them a broader view of the defensive backfield. The pass defenders, meanwhile, stood upright on the old film, with one foot forward, one back, and then just backpedaled to stay with the receivers. In the modern NFL, backfield defenders poise in a forward crouch with their weight evenly balanced on both legs, and retreat

and the Giants' defensive front five weighed an average of 244 pounds. Today, offensive lines on average weigh nearly 25 pounds more than defensive fronts.

Not everything has changed as much. Reid recognized one Colts offensive formation as "the one we run the most—two receivers, two backs, and a tight end." And he even noticed some of his own plays in the mix. "Look, this is a rattler route," he said, watching Raymond Berry twist his way into the backfield, turning the Giants cornerback completely around and gaining a step. "This is the one we ran in the Super Bowl that got picked by stinkin' Rodney Harrison." (Harrison's interception in the closing minutes of Super Bowl XXXIX clinched the New England Patriots' 24–21 win over the Eagles.)

After the Colts' opening boondoggle, the Giants settled into a 4–3 defense, which remains the pro standard. What we were watching on film was the original 4–3, contrived by New York defensive coach Tom Landry, years before he helped create a dynasty as head coach of the Dallas Cowboys. It features four players on the line of scrimmage backed by three linebackers; four pass defenders back up this formation: two cornerbacks split wide on either side, and two deep defenders, or safeties.

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The 4–3 was designed to counter the growing sophistication of passing offenses. Before the 1950s, football had primarily been a ground game, but after the invention of the wide receiver in 1949, defenses struggled to cover pass catchers without becoming too vulnerable to the run.

But while the 4–3 has survived to the present day, the simplicity of the old game often amazed Reid to the point of disbelief. The offensive formations were so basic that many of them are no longer even used in the pro game. The Giants frequently lined up in the T-formation—the quarterback behind the center, and the three running backs lined up horizontally about three yards behind him—and both teams employed the antiquated "single wing," where one halfback and the fullback line up beside each other, behind the quarterback, while the other halfback splits wide, sometimes all the way out to the flanker position.

The game as it was played in 1958 "is still an entertaining sport to watch, but it's just not near as complicated," Reid said. "If I'm calling the plays" on offense, he went on, "I get paid to get into a rhythm with the guy calling the defense" on the other side. When a coach achieves the right "rhythm," he can sense what his opponent is thinking—and for Reid, grasping the "rhythm" of the classic game was fairly easy. "I can see what the offense is doing," he said. "You can almost call it offensively and defensively."

The simplicity of the old game often amazed Reid to the point of disbelief. The offensive formations were so basic that many of them are no longer used in the pro game.

For instance, he was struck, early in the game, by how close behind the line of scrimmage the Giants safeties, Emlen Tunnell and Jimmy Patton, were setting up. Safeties ordinarily play five to 10 yards back. Tunnell and Patton were just three or four yards back. "First time I saw those safeties that tight," said Reid, "I'd take the tight end up the seam," referring to the hash marks that line the field to the right and left of the center.

As if hearing Reid's advice, that's what Unitas did two plays later. First, he felt out the defense: facing second down and long, the quarterback handed the ball to Dupre, who plunged into the left side of the Giants' defense, where he was hit by Tunnell.

"'Okay,' the Colts are saying, 'this guy, number 45 [Tunnell], is getting tight, and he was very aggressive on the last play, so we'll sell a hard fake,'" Reid speculated. The Colts would set up as if they were going with another running play, he predicted, with the tight end, Jim Mutscheller, "coming up and out like he is going to crack" Tunnell with a block, but instead going past him up the field. "Then they should try and get [a pass] over the top to Mutscheller."

On third down, Mutscheller moved just as Reid had suggested, faking a block on Tunnell and racing up the hash marks. Unitas faked the handoff and dropped back, looking downfield toward his tight end.

"But this guy [Tunnell] sniffs it out!" Reid said, impressed, watching as the safety turned and matched the tight end stride for stride. Unitas, harried suddenly by the Giants' blitzing right cornerback, instead hurried a throw to Moore—"his safety valve," said Reid—that was almost intercepted.

Because the ploy failed, most spectators, myself included, would not have recognized Baltimore's intent, or understood why it failed. Reid saw the reason. He froze the play and noted the fullback, Ameche, missing his block on the Giants cornerback, forcing the quarterback to hurry his throw. Players are forever screwing up the coach's perfect plans.

The Eagles coach saw another opportunity later in the game, when the Giants safeties opted to line up farther downfield in a "cover four" defense, with the four players in the backfield—Patton, Tunnell, Carl Karilivacz, and Lindon Crow—divvying up the defensive secondary into four lanes, each covering one.

"The thing you'd tell Johnny [Unitas] right here," Reid said, "is to take your best mismatch. You put T.O. [former Eagle, now Cowboys receiver, Terrell Owens, a noted deep threat] here and just picture him running a post over the top of that guy [Crow]." Sure enough, several plays later, the Colts exploited the formation, zeroing in on the most obvious mismatch by sending the speedy Moore racing down the right side of the field one-on-one with Crow. Unitas heaved the ball for a 60-yard gain.

Reid was impressed with Moore's speed and hands; less so with his blocking. On a later play, when Moore lined up in the backfield, Reid laughed and rolled the film back. "Watch this," he said. The ball is snapped and Unitas is eventually brought down by the Giants' defense, while Moore simply stays put in the same stance he was in before the snap of the ball. In slow motion, his statue-like pose is comical.

On a later play where Unitas was sacked, Reid again laughed and pointed to Moore missing an assignment. "Lenny didn't help, picking his nose right there, man. That's pissing me off." Then, on another play, "Lenny needs his ass whipped a little bit right here."

(In the Hall of Famer's defense, his back was injured early in the game when Huff picked him up and slammed him into the ground. Moore nearly came out after that, but Ewbank

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urged him to continue playing, if only as a decoy, because the Giants' defense was keying on him.)

Time after time, watching the vaunted Giants defense in action, Reid remarked how much he wished he could play against it. Landry's squad lined up in the same formation, with the same personnel, on almost every down.

"Very seldom do you see the same formation in a game anymore," he said. "That's just the way it is today. But this was just a part-time job for these guys. They didn't have the time to be in the building [for classroom study] all day."

Again, Reid was right. Most pro players in the 1950s held down full-time jobs off the field. Huff was a salesman for the textile company J. P. Stevens. Unitas and many of his teammates worked at Bethlehem Steel. Art Donovan, the Colts' hilarious defensive tackle known as Fatso, was a liquor salesman. Most of the men earned less than $10,000 a year playing football. The highest-paid stars made between $15,000 and $20,000—enough to support a middle-class lifestyle in 1958, but nothing like today's hefty paychecks. Players who took off from their full-time jobs to play were often expected to make up the time by working long hours in the off-season. This made them better prepared for life after football than many of their modern counterparts are, but it also meant that they were less prepared for Sunday's action.

Still, even if players had been able to devote time to perfecting more-complex schemes, Reid noted, there simply wouldn't have been enough time to implement them, because of the quicker, pretelevision speed of the game. In today's NFL, coaches will often alter both the personnel and the formation of their teams between downs.

The biggest difference between the two eras—literally—is the size and speed of modern athletes. The average player on the 1958 Colts starting team weighed 222 pounds. The average weight of a 2007 Indianapolis Colts starter was 243 pounds. And there is ample reason to believe that today's pros are not just bigger, but faster. For one thing, the league draws on a talent pool far broader and deeper than in the past. It was widely believed (and the evidence on the field suggested) that in the 1950s the league limited the number of African American players, with an unwritten agreement restricting each team to seven. Today, merit is the only criterion, and in some parts of the country, prospects for the pro game are selected and groomed when they are still in grade school. Training methods, dietary habits, coaching, and the quality of competition at all levels have vastly improved. In most cases, the modern pro football player has been preparing to play the game for most of his young life.

Even the kickers have evolved. Few modern teams lack field-goal kickers who can readily boot the ball through the uprights from 40 yards out, while the old toe-kickers, like Steve Myhra for the Colts and even Pat Summerall for the Giants, were shaky beyond 20. The consistency of modern kickers has transformed offensive strategy. In the overtime period of the classic game, for instance, the Colts elected to run five plays from inside the Giants' 20-yard line, because Ewbank did not trust Myhra enough to wager the game on his leg.

I asked Reid whether any of the legends on the field in 1958 might be able to keep up in today's game.

"I was looking to try to see players that I thought could play today," he said. "I think Moore probably could, and Raymond Berry would probably find a way to play. Gifford. Andy Nelson, he looked pretty good on that one run. I don't know what kind of all-out speed he had, but it looked like he moved around pretty good. And Unitas. Unitas could play."

Reid noticed a similarity between the old Colts superstar and the future Hall of Fame quarterback he had coached in Green Bay.

"There are only two quarterbacks that finish their throw," he said. "You always teach chin-to-shoulder follow-through. Your head follows through to your chin when you throw ... The ball is going to go where your head goes, and if you are consistent with your head placement ... normally good things will happen. There are only two quarterbacks who do it. Unitas and Brett Favre. Watch: every time, they follow through. It's chin to shoulder. You won't find any other quarterbacks that do it, but both those guys do it naturally."

We were watching Unitas at his finest. With less than two minutes on the clock, down by three points and 86 yards from the goal line, he orchestrated a brilliant seven-play passing drive. Three completions in the middle of this march, all of them to Berry, set up a game-tying field goal. (Sam Huff says that he is still haunted, a half century later, by the Yankee Stadium loudspeaker barking "Unitas to Berry, Unitas to Berry.") With just seven seconds on the clock, Ewbank had no choice but to send in Myhra, who booted the game-tying 19-yard field goal to set up the first overtime in pro history. It remains the only overtime ever in an NFL championship game.

At this point, Reid had become a rapt spectator.

"This is just simple football right now, man," he said.

The Giants won the toss and got the ball first in overtime, but they failed to make a first down. They punted, and Unitas did it again, this time without pressure from the clock, mixing runs and passes to move his team 80 yards in 13 plays. Berry caught two more passes for 21 and 12 yards, and then Unitas, spotting Huff cheating to his right in an effort to stop Berry, sent Ameche up the center on a perfectly executed trap play. The Colts' right tackle, George Preas, raced across the defensive backfield to flatten the middle linebacker and clear a path for the fullback, who sprinted 22 yards up the middle of the field to the Giants' 20-yard line.

It ended five plays later, when Ameche plunged over the goal line for the winning touchdown—with Moore, still playing hurt, throwing a perfect block to clear the way. Reid said, simply, "Awesome."

Mark Bowden is an *Atlantic* national correspondent.

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If foreign oil has us over a barrel now, what happens when our population increases by another 100 million?

As rising fuel prices put renewed pressure on family budgets, many worry price increases will continue. Some recall the mile-long gas lines years ago when Americans had to compete for a share of dwindling energy supplies. With America's population at a record 300 million today, supplies are again tight in spite of record high prices. And the U.S. Census Bureau projects that another 110 million people will be added to our population between 2000 and 2040*. What will happen to energy prices then? Not to mention food and other resources. Fortunately, there is some hope. Americans are already consuming less. Alternative fuel sources are now being vigorously pursued. And another major leap in population is avoidable if we all work together. According to the Pew Hispanic Research Center, 82% of America's projected population increase between 2005 and 2050 will result from immigration. If we can continue reducing our energy consumption, begin leveraging alternative fuels and agree on a reasonable plan to reduce immigration, we may be able to reduce the threat of even higher prices tomorrow. Aren't we all tired of foreign interests having us over a barrel?

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Is Pornography Adultery?

BY ROSS DOUTHAT

Illustration by John Cuneo

THE MARRIAGE OF Christie Brinkley and Peter Cook collapsed the old-fashioned way in 2006, when she discovered that he was sleeping with his 18-year-old assistant. But their divorce trial this summer was a distinctly Internet-age affair. Having insisted on keeping the proceedings open to the media, Brinkley and her lawyers served up a long list of juicy allegations about Cook's taste in online porn: the $3,000 a month he dropped on adult Web sites, the nude photos he posted online, the user names he favored ("happyladdie2002," for instance, and "wannaseeall") while surfing swinger sites, even the videos he supposedly made of himself masturbating.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the porn-related revelations, though, was the ambiguity about what line, precisely, Cook was accused of having crossed. Was the porn habit a betrayal in and of itself? Was it the financial irresponsibility that mattered most, or the addictive behavior it suggested? Was it the way his habit had segued into other online activities? Or was it about Cook's fitness as a parent, and the possibility that their son had stumbled upon his porn cache? Clearly, the court and the public were supposed to think that Cook was an even lousier husband than his affair with a teenager might have indicated. But it was considerably less clear whether the porn habit itself was supposed to prove this, or whether it was the particulars—the monthly bill, the swinger sites, the webcam, the danger to the kids—that made the difference.

The notion that pornography, and especially hard-core pornography, has *something* to do with marital infidelity has been floating around the edges of the American conversation for a while now, even as the porn industry, by some estimates, has swollen to rival professional sports and the major broadcast networks as a revenue-generating source of entertainment. A 2002 survey of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers suggests that Internet porn plays a part in an

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increasing number of divorce cases, and the Brinkley-Cook divorce wasn't the first celebrity split to feature porn-related revelations. In 2005, at the start of their messy divorce, Denise Richards accused Charlie Sheen of posting shots of his genitalia online and cultivating a taste for "barely legal" porn sites. Two years later, Anne Heche, Ellen DeGeneres's ex, accused her non-celeb husband of surfing porn sites when he was supposed to be taking care of their 5-year-old son. The country singer Sara Evans's 2006 divorce involved similar allegations, including the claim that her husband had collected 100 nude photographs of himself and solicited sex online.

But the attention paid to the connection between porn and infidelity doesn't translate into anything like a consensus on what that connection is. Polls show that Americans are almost evenly divided on questions like whether porn is bad for relationships, whether it's an inevitable feature of male existence, and whether it's demeaning to women. This divide tends to cut along gender lines, inevitably: women are more likely to look at pornography than in the past, but they remain considerably more hostile to porn than men are, and considerably less likely to make use of it. (Even among the Internet generation, the split between the sexes remains stark. A survey of American college students last year found that 70 percent of the women in the sample never looked at pornography, compared with just 14 percent of their male peers; almost half of the men surveyed looked at porn at least once a week, versus just 3 percent of the women.)

One perspective, broadly construed, treats porn as a harmless habit, near-universal among men, and at worst a little silly. This is the viewpoint that's transformed adult-industry icons like Jenna Jameson and Ron Jeremy from targets of opprobrium into C-list celebrities. It's what inspires fledgling stars to gin up sex tapes in the hope of boosting their careers. And it's made smut a staple of gross-out comedy: rising-star funnyman Seth Rogen has gone from headlining Judd Apatow's *Knocked Up*, in which his character's aspiration to run a pornographic Web site was somewhat incidental to the plot, to starring in Kevin Smith's forthcoming *Zack and Miri Make a Porno*, in which the porn business promises to be rather more central.

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For an interview with Ross Douthat about pornography and adultery, visit www.theatlantic.com/porn.

A second perspective treats porn as a kind of gateway drug—a vice that paves the way for more-serious betrayals. A 2004 study found that married individuals who cheated on their spouses were three times as likely to have used Internet pornography as married people who hadn't committed adultery. In Tom Perrotta's bestselling *Little Children*, the female protagonist's husband—who is himself being cuckolded—progresses from obsessing over an online porn star named "Slutty Kay" to sending away for her panties to joining a club of fans who pay to vacation with her in person. Brinkley's husband may have followed a similar trajectory, along with many of the other porn-happy celebrity spouses who've featured in the gossip pages and divorce courts lately.

Maybe it's worth sharpening the debate. Over the past three decades, the VCR, on-demand cable service, and the Internet have completely overhauled the ways in which people interact with porn. Innovation has piled on innovation, making modern pornography a more immediate, visceral, and personalized experience. Nothing in the long history of erotica compares with the way millions of Americans experience porn today, and our moral intuitions are struggling to catch up. As we try to make sense of the brave new world that VHS and streaming video have built, we might start by asking a radical question: Is pornography use a form of adultery?

The most stringent take on this matter comes, of course, from Jesus of Nazareth: "I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." But even among Christians, this teaching tends to be grouped with the Gospel injunctions about turning the other cheek and giving would-be robbers your possessions—as a guideline for saintliness, useful to Francis of Assisi and the Desert Fathers but less helpful to ordinary sinners trying to figure out what counts as a breach of marital trust. Jimmy Carter's confession to *Playboy* that he had "lusted in [his] heart" still inspires giggles three decades later. Most Americans, devout or secular, are inclined to distinguish lustful thoughts from lustful actions, and hew to the *Merriam-Webster* definition of adultery as "voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband."

On the face of things, this definition would seem to let porn users off the hook. Intercourse, after all, involves physicality, a flesh-and-blood encounter that Internet Explorer and the DVD player can't provide, no matter what sort of adultery the user happens to be committing in his heart.

But there's another way to look at it. During the long, late-winter week that transformed the governor of New York, Eliot Spitzer, into an alleged john, a late-night punch line, and finally an ex-governor, there was a lively debate on blogs and radio shows and op-ed pages about whether prostitution ought to be illegal at all. Yet amid all the chatter about whether the FBI should have cared about Spitzer's habit of paying for extramarital sex, next to nobody suggested, publicly at least, that *his wife* ought not to care—that Silda Spitzer ought to have been grateful he was seeking only sexual gratification elsewhere, and that so long as he was loyal to her in his mind and heart, it shouldn't matter what he did with his penis.

Start with the near-universal assumption that what Spitzer did in his hotel room constituted adultery, and then ponder whether Silda Spitzer would have had cause to feel betrayed if the FBI probe had revealed that her husband had paid merely to *watch* a prostitute perform sexual acts while he folded himself into a hotel armchair to masturbate. My suspicion is that an

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awful lot of people would say yes—not because there isn't some distinction between the two acts, but because the distinction isn't morally significant enough to prevent both from belonging to the zone, broadly defined, of cheating on your wife.

You can see where I'm going with this. If it's cheating on your wife to watch while another woman performs sexually in front of you, then why isn't it cheating to watch while the same sort of spectacle unfolds on your laptop or TV? Isn't the man who uses hard-core pornography already betraying his wife, whether or not the habit leads to anything worse? (The same goes, of course, for a wife betraying her husband—the arguments in this essay should be assumed to apply as well to the small minority of women who use porn.)

Fine, you might respond, but there are betrayals and then there are betrayals. The man who lets his eyes stray across the photo of Gisele Bündchen, bare-assed and beguiling on the cover of *GQ*, has betrayed his wife in some sense, but only a 21st-century Savonarola would describe that sort of thing as adultery. The line that matters is the one between fantasy and reality—between the call girl who's really there having sex with you, and the porn star who's selling the *image* of herself having sex to a host of men she'll never even meet. In this reading, porn is "a fictional, fantastical, even allegorical realm," as the cultural critic Laura Kipnis described it in the mid-1990s—"mythological and hyperbolic" rather than realistic, and experienced not as a form of intercourse but as a "popular-culture genre," like true crime or science fiction.

This seems like a potentially reasonable distinction to draw. But the fantasy-versus-reality, pixels-versus-flesh binary feels more appropriate to the pre-Internet landscape than to one where people spend hours every day in entirely virtual worlds, whether they're accumulating "friends" on Facebook, acting out Tolkienesque fantasies in World of Warcraft, or flirting with a sexy avatar in Second Life. And it feels much more appropriate to the tamer sorts of pornography, from the increasingly archaic (dirty playing cards and pinups, smutty books and the *Penthouse* letters section) to the of-the-moment (the topless photos and sex-scene stills in the more restrained precincts of the online pornosphere), than it does to the harder-core material at the heart of the porn economy. Masturbating to a *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit model (like Christie Brinkley, once upon a time) or a *Playboy* centerfold is a one-way street: the images are intended to provoke fantasies, not to embody reality, since the women pictured aren't having sex for the viewer's gratification. Even strippers, for all their flesh-and-blood appeal, are essentially fantasy objects—depending on how you respond to a lap dance, of course. But hard-core pornography is real sex by definition, and the two sexual acts involved—the on-camera copulation, and the masturbation it enables—are interdependent: neither would happen without the other. The whole point of a centerfold is her unattainability, but with hard-core porn, it's precisely the reverse: the star isn't just attainable, she's already being attained, and the user gets to be in on the action.

Moreover, the way the porn industry is evolving reflects the extent to which the Internet subverts the fantasy-reality dichotomy. After years of booming profits, the "mainstream" porn studios are increasingly losing ground to start-ups and freelancers—people making sex videos on their beds and sofas and shag carpeting and uploading them on the cheap. It turns out that, increasingly, Americans don't want porn as a "kind of science fiction," as Kipnis put it—they want realistic porn, porn

SEARCHING

I recall someone once admitting
that all he remembered of *Anna Karenina*
was something about a picnic basket,

and now, after consuming a book
devoted to the subject of Barcelona—
its people, its history, its complex architecture—

all I remember is the mention
of an albino gorilla, the inhabitant of a park
where the Citadel of the Bourbons once stood.

The sheer paleness of him looms over
all the notable names and dates
as the evening strollers stop before him

and point to show their children.
These locals called him Snowflake,
and here he has been mentioned again in print

in the hope of keeping his pallid flame alive
and helping him, despite his name, to endure
in this poem, where he has found another cage.

Oh, Snowflake,
I had no interest in the capital of Catalonia—
its people, its history, its complex architecture—

no, you were the reason
I kept my light on late into the night,
turning all those pages, searching for you everywhere.

—BILLY COLLINS

Billy Collins's new book of poems is *Ballistics*. He served as the U.S. poet laureate from 2001 to 2003.

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that resembles the sex they might be having, and porn that at every moment holds out the promise that they can join in, like Peter Cook masturbating in front of his webcam.

So yes, there's an obvious line between leafing through a *Playboy* and pulling a Spitzer on your wife. But the line between Spitzer and the suburban husband who pays $29.95 a month to stream hard-core sex onto his laptop is considerably blurrier. The suburbanite with the hard-core porn hookup is masturbating to real sex, albeit at a DSL-enabled remove. He's experiencing it in an intimate setting, rather than in a grind house alongside other huddled masturbators in raincoats, and in a form that's customized to his tastes in a way that mass-market porn like *Deep Throat* and *Debbie Does Dallas* never was. There's no emotional connection, true—but there presumably wasn't one on Spitzer's part, either.

This isn't to say the distinction between hiring a prostitute and shelling out for online porn doesn't matter; in moral issues, every distinction matters. But if you approach infidelity as a continuum of betrayal rather than an either/or proposition, then the Internet era has ratcheted the experience of pornography much closer to adultery than I suspect most porn users would like to admit.

> that they look at porn—that's just inconsiderate—telling women that the porn "problem" can be resolved through good communication, couples counseling, or a chat with your pastor is neither helpful nor realistic.

Savage's perspective is hardly unique, and is found among women as well as men. In 2003, three psychology professors at Illinois State University surveyed a broad population of women who were, or had been, in a relationship with a man who they knew used pornography. About a third of the women described the porn habit as a form of betrayal and infidelity. But the majority were neutral or even positively disposed to their lover's taste for smut, responding slightly more favorably than not to prompts like "I do not mind my partner's pornography use" or "My partner's pornography use is perfectly normal."

This point of view—that looking at pornography is a "perfectly normal" activity, one that the more-judgmental third of women need to just stop whining about—has been strengthened by the erosion of the second-order arguments against the use of porn, especially the argument that it feeds misogyny and encourages rape. In the great porn debates of the 1980s, arguments linking porn to violence against women

Nothing in the history of erotica compares with the way Americans experience porn today, and our moral intuitions are struggling to catch up.

It's possible, of course, to consider hard-core porn use a kind of infidelity and shrug it off even so. After all, human societies have frequently made sweeping accommodations for extramarital dalliances, usually on the assumption that the male libido simply can't be expected to submit to monogamy. When apologists for pornography aren't making Kipnis-style appeals to cultural transgression and sexual imagination, they tend to fall back on the defense that it's pointless to moralize about porn, because men are going to use it anyway.

Here's Dan Savage, the popular Seattle-based sex columnist, responding to a reader who fretted about her boyfriend's porn habit—"not because I'm jealous," she wrote, "but because I'm insecure. I'm sure many of those girls are more attractive than me":

> All men look at porn ... The handful of men who claim they don't look at porn are liars or castrates. Tearful discussions about your insecurities or your feminist principles will not stop a man from looking at porn. That's why the best advice for straight women is this: GET OVER IT. If you don't want to be with someone who looks at porn ... get a woman, get a dog, or get a blind guy ... While men shouldn't rub their female partners' noses in the fact

were advanced across the ideological spectrum. Feminist crusaders like Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon denounced smut as a weapon of the patriarchy; the Christian radio psychologist (and future religious-right fixture) James Dobson induced the serial killer Ted Bundy to confess on death row to a pornography addiction; the Meese Commission on Pornography declared, "In both clinical and experimental settings, exposure to sexually violent materials has indicated an increase in the likelihood of aggression." It all sounded plausible—but between 1980 and 2004, an era in which porn became more available, and in more varieties, the rate of reported sexual violence *dropped*, and by 85 percent. Correlation isn't necessarily causation, but the sharpness of the decline at least suggests that porn may reduce sexual violence, by providing an outlet for some potential sex offenders. (Indeed, the best way to deter a rapist might be to hook him up with a high-speed Internet connection: in a 2006 study, the Clemson economist Todd Kendall found that a 10 percent increase in Internet access is associated with a 7 percent decline in reported rapes.)

And what's true of rapists could be true of ordinary married men, a porn apologist might argue. For every Peter Cook, using porn *and* sleeping around, there might be countless men who

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use porn as a substitute for extramarital dalliances, satisfying their need for sexual variety without hiring a prostitute or kicking off a workplace romance.

Like Philip Weiss's friends, for instance. In the wake of the Spitzer affair, Weiss, a New York–based investigative journalist, came closer than any mainstream writer to endorsing not only the legalization of prostitution but the destigmatization of infidelity, in a rambling essay for *New York* magazine on the agonies that monogamy imposes on his buddies. Amid nostalgia for the days of courtesans and concubines and the usual plaints about how much more sophisticated things are in Europe, Weiss depicted porn as the modern man's "common answer" to the marital-sex deficit. Here's one of his pals dilating on his online outlets:

> "Porn captures these women [its performers] before they get smart," he said in a hot whisper as we sat in Schiller's Liquor Bar on the Lower East Side. Porn exploited the sexual desires, and naïveté, of women in their early twenties, he went on ... He spoke of acts he observed online that his wife wouldn't do. "It's painful to say, but that's your boys' night out, and it takes an enlightened woman to say that."

The use of the term *enlightened* is telling, since the strongest argument for the acceptance of pornography—and the hard-core variety in particular—is precisely that it represents a form of sexual progress, a more civilized approach to the problem of the male libido than either the toleration of mass prostitution or the attempt, from the Victorian era onward, to simultaneously legislate prostitution away and hold married couples to an unreasonably high standard of fidelity. Porn may be an evil, this argument goes, but it's the least of several evils. The man who uses porn is cheating sexually, but he isn't involving himself in an emotional relationship. He's cheating in a way that carries none of the risks of intercourse, from pregnancy to venereal disease. And he's cheating with women who may be trading sex for money, but are doing so in vastly safer situations than streetwalkers or even high-end escorts.

Indeed, in a significant sense, the porn industry looks like what advocates of legalized prostitution hope to achieve for "sex workers." There are no bullying pimps and no police officers demanding sex in return for not putting the prostitutes in jail. There are regular tests for STDs, at least in the higher-end sectors of the industry. The performers are safely separated from their johns. And freelancers aren't wandering downtown intersections on their own; they're filming from the friendly confines of their homes.

If we would just accept Dan Savage's advice, then, and *get over it*, everyone would gain something. Weiss and his pals could have their "boys' night out" online and enjoy sexual experiences that their marriages deny them. The majority of wives could rest secure in the knowledge that worse forms of infidelity are being averted; some women could get into the act themselves, either solo or with their spouse, experiencing the thrill of a threesome or a '70s key party with fewer of the consequences. The porn industry's sex workers could earn a steady paycheck without worrying about pimps, police, or HIV. Every society lives with infidelity in one form or another, whether openly or hypocritically. Why shouldn't we learn to live with porn?

Live with it we almost certainly will. But it's worth being clear about what we're accepting. Yes, adultery is inevitable, but it's never been universal in the way that pornography has the potential to become—at least if we approach the use of hard-core porn as a normal outlet from the rigors of monogamy, and invest ourselves in a cultural paradigm that understands this as something all men do and all women need to live with. In the name of providing a low-risk alternative for males who would otherwise be tempted by "real" prostitutes and "real" affairs, we're ultimately universalizing, in a milder but not all that much milder form, the sort of degradation and betrayal that only a minority of men have traditionally been involved in.

Go back to Philip Weiss's pal and listen to him talk: *Porn captures these women before they get smart ... It's painful to say, but that's your boys' night out.* This is the language of a man who has accepted, not as a temporary lapse but as a permanent and necessary aspect of his married life, a paid sexual relationship with women other than his wife. And it's the language of a man who has internalized a view of marriage as a sexual prison, rendered bearable only by frequent online furloughs with women more easily exploited than his spouse.

Calling porn a form of adultery isn't about pretending that we can make it disappear. The temptation will always be there, and of course people will give in to it. I've looked at porn; if you're male and breathing, chances are so have you. Rather, it's about what sort of people we aspire to be: how we define our ideals, how we draw the lines in our relationships, and how we feel about ourselves if we cross them. And it's about providing a way for everyone involved, men and women alike—whether they're using porn or merely tolerating it—to think about what, precisely, they're involving themselves in, and whether they should reconsider.

The extremes of anti-porn hysteria are unhelpful in this debate. If the turn toward an "everybody does it" approach to pornography and marriage is wrong, it's because that approach is wrong in and of itself, not because porn is going to wreck society, destroy the institution of marriage, and turn thousands of rapists loose to prey on unsuspecting women. Smut isn't going to bring down Western Civilization any more than Nero's orgies actually led to the fall of Rome, and a society that expects near-universal online infidelity may run just as smoothly as a society that doesn't.

Which is precisely why it's so easy to say that the spread of pornography means that we're just taking a turn, where sex and fidelity are concerned, toward realism, toward adulthood, toward sophistication. All we have to give up to get there is our sense of decency.

Ross Douthat, an *Atlantic* senior editor, blogs at rossdouthat.theatlantic.com.

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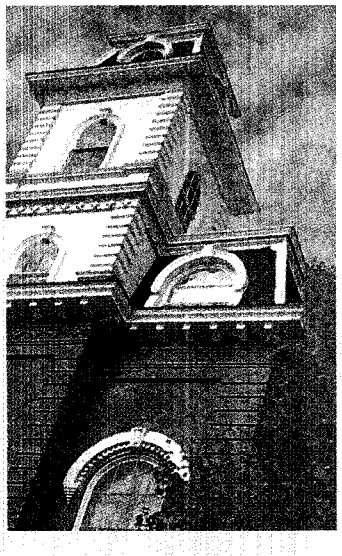

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NOVELISTIC NOSTALGIA

A girl in period dress wanders through Avonlea, a recreation of the village that Lucy Maud Montgomery imagined for *Anne of Green Gables*. In this month's Travels article, Wayne Curtis explores Prince Edward Island, a land where "fact and fiction share a single habitat."

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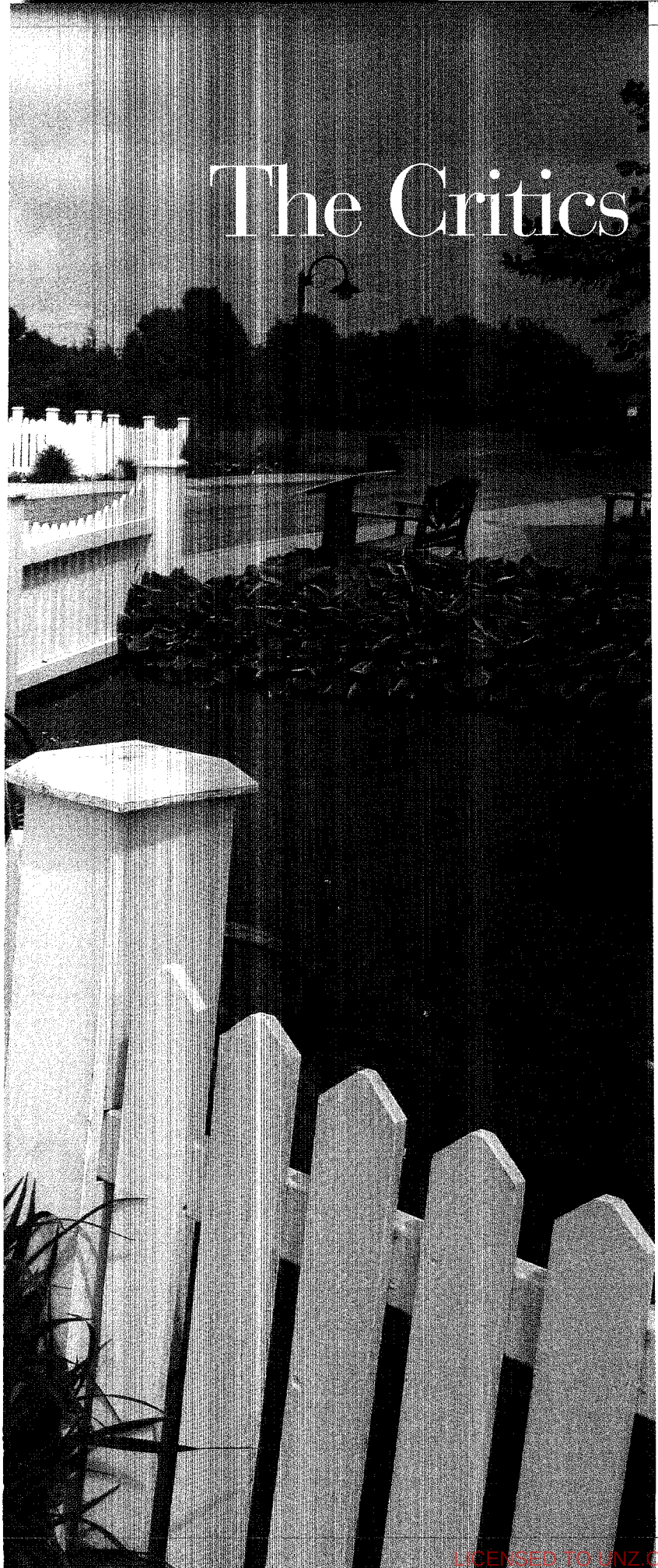

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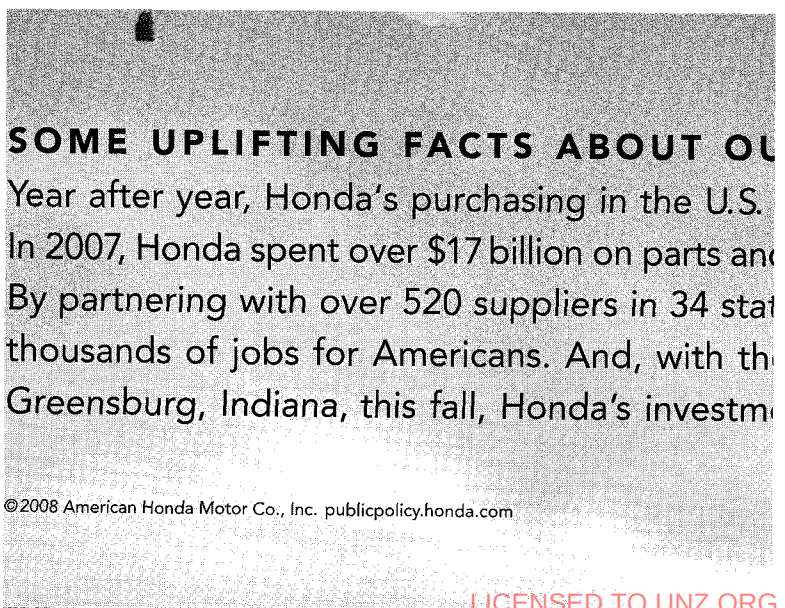

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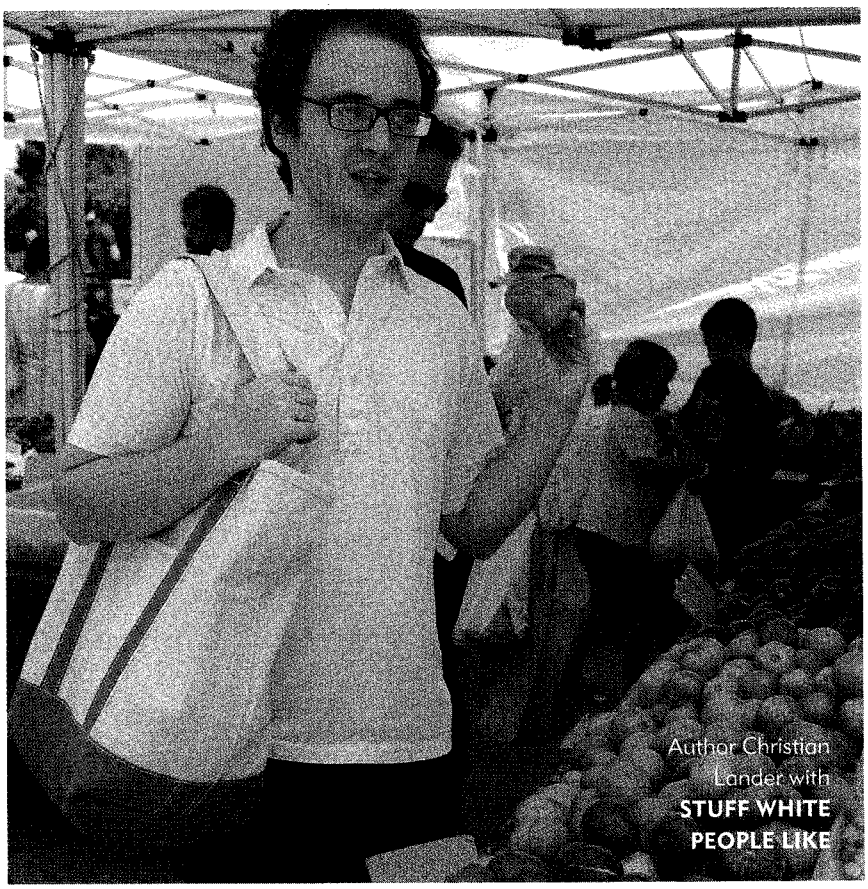
BOOKS

Editor's Choice: The new "white people" are bigoted, but not the way you think—or they'll admit.

Intolerant Chic

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ



Author Christian Lander with STUFF WHITE PEOPLE LIKE

JESS LANDER

In January, Christian Lander—a 29-year-old Toronto-raised, McGill-educated Ph.D. dropout who worked as a corporate communications manager in Los Angeles—started a blog called Stuff White People Like. By February, the site was a runaway hit, garnering 30,000 hits daily. By March, it was getting 300,000. SWPL—which catalogs the tastes, prejudices, and consumption habits of well-off, well-educated, youngish, self-described progressives—was refreshing because it's everything a blog, almost by definition, is not. Rather than serving up unedited, impromptu, self-important ruminations on random events and topics, the tightly focused, stylishly written, precisely observed entries eschew the genre's characteristic *I* (though Lander in fact writes nearly all of them) and adopt a cool, never snarky though sometimes biting, pseudo-anthropological tone.

The considered but undeveloped entries provide ample fodder for a penetrating book, in which Lander could have defined and explored the ramifications (cultural, sociological, political) of his subject, or at least addressed some of the controversies and misconceptions his site has engendered—many of which are provoked by its title. Instead, publisher and author have chosen not to monkey with success. Leaving aside the delightfully off-kilter photographs and the too-cute flowcharts and quizzes, this all-but-instant work (book deal in March, publication in July) is an assemblage of Lander's blog essays—including those available on the site when the book went to the printer plus 75 new ones, about the same length as the originals. Even if the book is frustratingly skeletal, perhaps 20 of the 150 total entries should have been cut, and while Lander is a terrific writer, rigorous editing would have made them all sharper. But the book—by virtue of both the new entries and the ease of reading Lander's observations seriatim—reveals the author to be a weightier and angrier cultural critic than his fans and detractors apprehend.

Lander's White People aren't always white, and the vast majority of whites aren't White People (he doesn't even capitalize the term). But although Lander's designation is peculiar, he's hardly the first to dissect this elite and its immediate predecessors (see for instance Mark E. Kann's *Middle Class Radicalism in Santa Monica*, Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism*, Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*, and David Brooks's *Bobos in Paradise*—Brooks calls these people variously "bourgeois bohemians," the "educated elite," and the "cosmopolitan class"). Lander, like many of these writers, traces this group's values to the 1960s, and there's clearly a connection between a politics based on "self-cultivation" (to quote the Students for a Democratic Society's gaseous manifesto,

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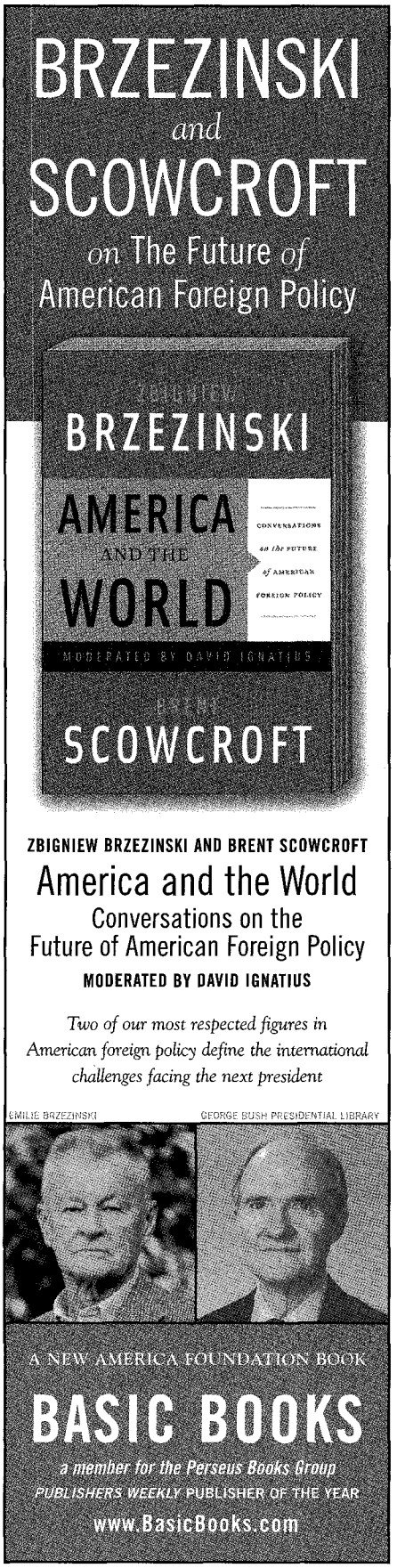

the Port Huron Statement) and what Lander defines as White People's ethos: "their number-one concern is about the best way to make themselves happy." That concern progresses naturally into consumer narcissism and a fixation on health and "well-being": Lander's most entertaining and spot-on entries dissect White People's elaborate sumptuary codes, their dogged pursuit of their own care and feeding, and their efforts to define themselves and their values through their all-but-uniform taste and accessories (Sedaris/Eggers/*The Daily Show*/the right indie music/Obama bumper stickers/uh, *The New Yorker*).

So why call this group "White People"? Lander is almost certainly being mischievous. After all, dismissing something or someone as "so white" has long been a favorite put-down among those who like to view themselves as right-thinking, hierarchy-defying nonconformists—that is, White People. Recall those ads extolling "the new face of wealth," which contrast male, stone-faced WASP bankers with attractive, far less formally—though far more expensively—clad women, quasi-hipsters, and assorted exotic ethnics. The women and hipsters may be white, but they're not *white*—they're members of the cool-looking pan-ethnic tribe, a tribe defined by economic and social status and by cultural and aesthetic preferences rather than by ethnicity. When I interviewed Lander on the telephone in July, he acknowledged that White People are in fact "desperate to define themselves as other than white." Indeed, he rightly places "diversity" and "tolerance" highest on the list of virtues prized by White People (as did Brooks for Bobos). Of course, this group shuns the suburbs (sterile, bland ... *white*—a view that hasn't advanced much since Malvina Reynolds's contemptuous "Little Boxes" of 1962) while it embraces certain neighborhoods as "authentic" (Williamsburg, Echo Park, the Mission) and spurns other enclaves and cities (say, Astoria, Reseda, Concord). Lander's White People approve of the kind of diversity that affords them the aesthetic and consumer benefits of what they like to think of as urban life—that is, the kind that allows them to

> get sushi and tacos on the same street. But they will also send their kids to private school with other rich white kids so that they can avoid the "low test scores" that come with educational diversity.

Here and elsewhere, accompanying the book's mockery of the essentially innocuous solipsism of White People is what Lander, a man of the left, described to me as his exasperation with progressives' "cultural righteousness" and "intolerance and groupthink"—a set of attitudes that enhances and is enhanced by a profoundly smug and incurious outlook. To be sure, these faults aren't peculiar to the progressive and the hip, but Lander repeatedly and cleverly shows how some of White People's favorite activities (watching political documentaries, "raising awareness," foreign travel), which they complacently embrace as broadening, are in fact lazy and tend to be intellectually and politically stultifying: White People "like feeling smart without doing work—two hours in a theater is easier than ten hours with a book."

More damning is the conclusion produced by a careful reading of this often fine-grained semi-sociological analysis: a good deal of the progressives' attitudes, preferences, and sense of identity are ingrained in an unlovely disdain for those outside their charmed circle. In Lander's analysis, much of their self-satisfaction derives from consumption (the slack-sounding "stuff" in the title is deceptively apt)—and much of that consumption is motivated by a desire to differentiate themselves from the benighted. Sushi, for instance, is "everything [White People] want: foreign culture, expensive, healthy, and hated by the 'uneducated.'" And whatever its goals, the ACLU is beloved by White People, Lander satirically but not wholly unjustifiably asserts, because it protects them "from having to look at things they don't like. At the top of this list is anything that has to do with Christianity"—an aversion, Lander discerns, rooted not in religious enmity but in taste (Christianity is "a little trashy"),

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formed largely by class and education. To those of this mind-set, the problem with a great many Americans is that they don't "care about the right things."

In fact, he asserts in a somewhat atypical aside that betrays the steel behind his joshing, White People "really do hate a significant portion of the population." But Lander, usually the nonchalant observer, never lapses into the easy faux populism of the right, and although he doesn't overstate White People's alienation from the culture and politics of the American majority, it's striking that his (to my mind accurate) list of the political and intellectual heroes of the young, affluent, and progressive—Cornel West, Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore—includes figures, wise or foolish, who are pretty detached from the mainstream (a fact made conspicuous in a comparison to the saints of the young progressives of the early-1960s, Ben Shahn–print-loving variety: Eleanor Roosevelt and Norman Thomas).

More important, for those whose "politics" are almost entirely gestural, not only do the personal and the political insidiously entwine, so do the aesthetic and the political. The logic, born in college dining halls and now embraced by people well into adulthood, that holds that donning a colored plastic bracelet or a kaffiyeh is an act of personal and political self-definition can and does attach the same significance to snowboarding and to selecting one's iPod playlist. When everything is "political," of course, nothing is. Moreover, this way of thinking is hardly a formula for the "change" so much in vogue and for the coalition-building required of a mass politics of the progressive or any other variety. Yes, yes, we've reached the highest stage of capitalism, and with it the personal choice and diversity so beloved of White People. But those who strive for truly radical—that is, class-based—political change must long for the days of a crude and relatively undifferentiated popular and consumer culture, when stuff was just ... stuff.

Benjamin Schwarz is *The Atlantic*'s literary editor and national editor.

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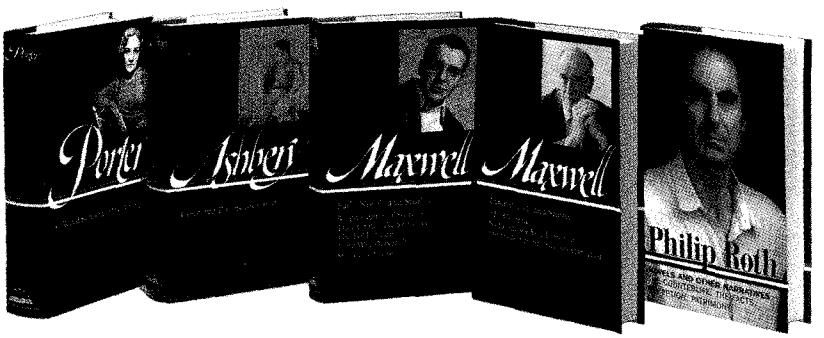

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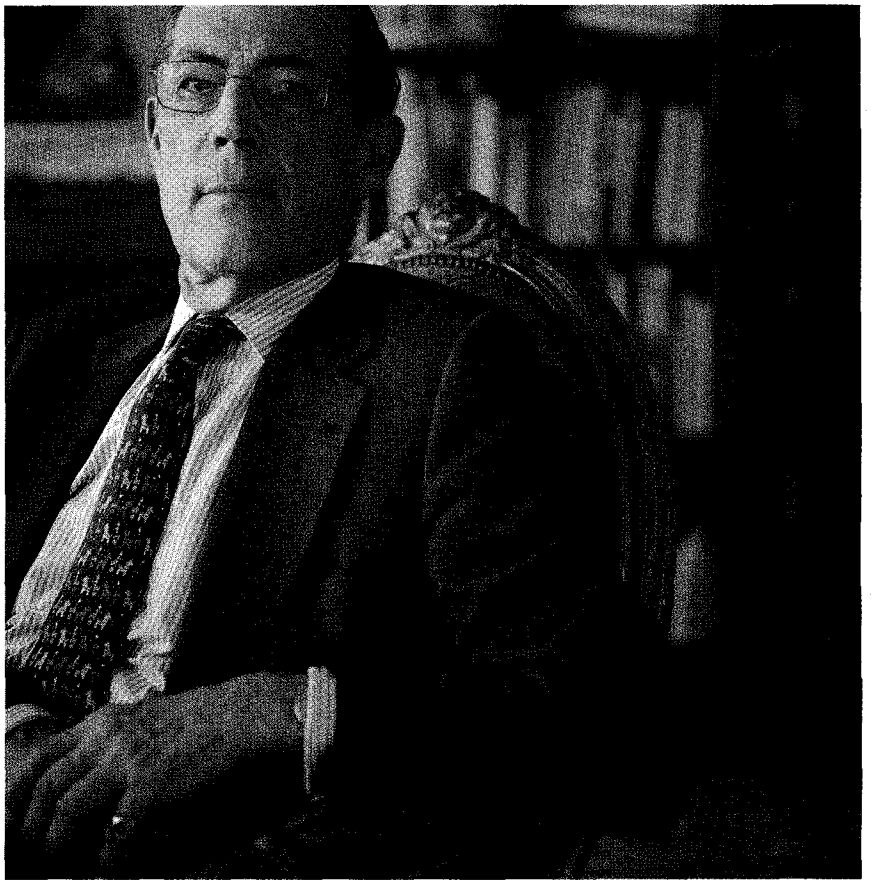
BOOKS

Unlike most modern museum directors, Philippe de Montebello trusted the public to embrace his high standards—and it did.

The Man Who Remade the Met

BY JED PERL



DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, founded in 1870, is enjoying a golden age. And if a single person can be said to have shaped this extraordinary era, it's Philippe de Montebello, the director of the museum since 1977. The announcement last winter that he would step down by the end of the year has provoked stock taking and soul searching inside the museum and beyond. This month an exhibition opens, "The Philippe de Montebello Years: Curators Celebrate Three Decades of Acquisitions," that draws on work from the museum's 17 curatorial departments. Among the treasures assembled: a Kongo power figure, its massive torso bristling with nails; a guitar that once belonged to Segovia; a sweetly sensuous yet austere Buddha from fifth-century India; Rubens's sumptuously romantic self-portrait with his young wife; and, most extraordinary of all, Duccio's intimate, gentle, tiny *Madonna and Child*, a work that almost immediately found its way into the hearts of many New Yorkers when it was purchased, in 2004. These wonders join the 2 million objects in what may well be the greatest encyclopedic art museum in the world. But acquisitions are only the beginning of the glories of the de Montebello years.

This has in many respects been an unlikely golden age, unfolding as corporate and government support shrinks and the conviction grows among cultural arbiters that the public will invariably gravitate toward the latest pop sensation rather than the art of the past. De Montebello, however, isn't among the pessimists. Rejecting the idea that a museum lives or dies on the basis of a few heavily marketed blockbuster events, de Montebello operates, as he told me in May, under the assumption that "the public is a lot smarter than anybody gives it credit for. The public as a whole has intellectual curiosity. These are people who know the difference between a serious show and pure sham." This theory and its corollary—"If you take the high road, the public comes to expect it"—animate nearly everything the museum does. What some may regard as the Metropolitan's overly rarefied adventures include exhibitions devoted to Byzantine art and Renaissance and Baroque tapestries, the immaculate reinstallation of the Greek and Roman collection in new galleries, and the recent "Poussin and Nature: Arcadian Visions," a show that explored the poetic reveries of the most rigorously intellectual of all painters. The pundits expect the majority of museumgoers to reject Byzantine icons, Renaissance tapestries, Greek vases, and Poussin's landscapes. But at the Metropolitan, the pundits are proven wrong—time and again.

In a period when museums seem increasingly schizophrenic—bouncing between a curator's desire to present the best work in the most illuminating way and a marketing executive's obsession with the next blockbuster show or

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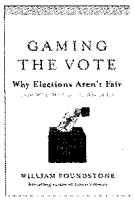

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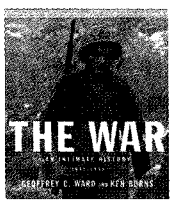

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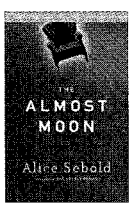

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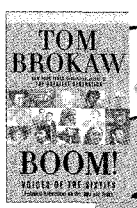

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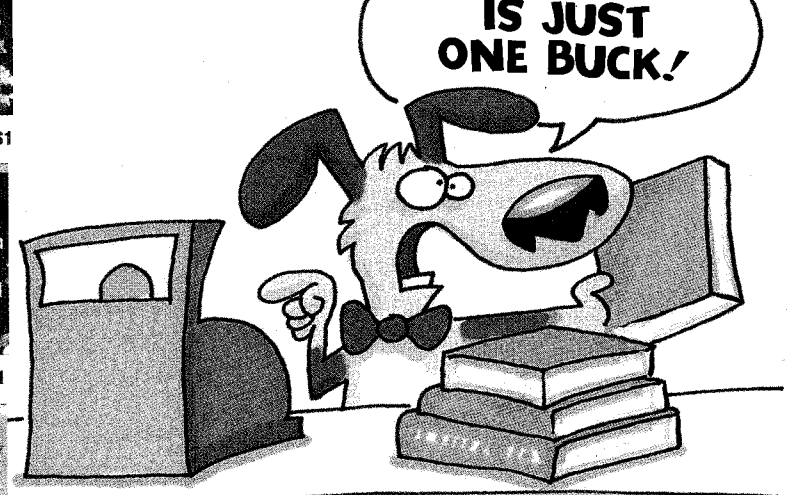

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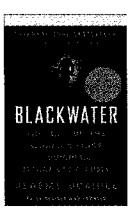

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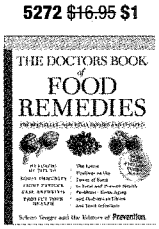

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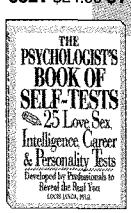

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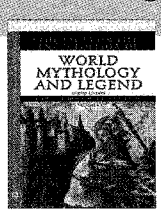

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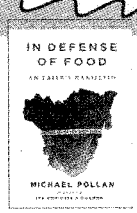

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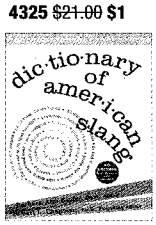

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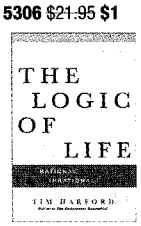

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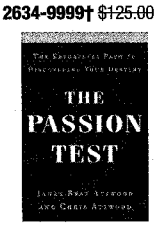

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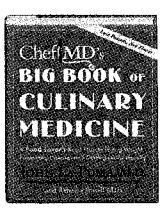

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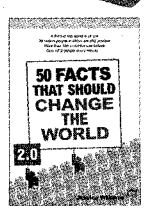

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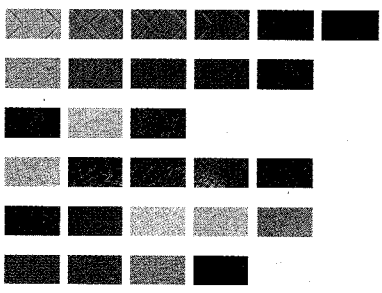
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high-profile building scheme—the Metropolitan offers nuance and coherence. Rather than herding visitors into the big show or the galleries with the greatest hits, the Metropolitan encourages them to take in a variety of unexpected treasures, often less well-known but equally worthy of attention. Every day, visitors linger over works on paper—a Rembrandt drawing, for instance, or a 19th-century children's book, or a 20th-century photograph—placed front and center, just off the great staircase on the second floor. In most museums, prints and drawings and vintage photographs are relegated to a remote location, filed away as specialized items for specialized tastes. Here they occupy prime real estate, where they can't be missed. The assumption at the Metropolitan—the most visited attraction in the most museum-conscious city in the country—is that the public can respond to anything beautiful or curious or rare, if only given a chance.

MUSEUM, INC: Inside the Global Art World
by Paul Werner
Prickly Paradigm Press

POUSSIN AND NATURE: Arcadian Visions
Edited by Pierre Rosenberg and Keith Christiansen
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

TAPESTRY IN THE RENAISSANCE: Art and Magnificence
by Thomas P. Campbell
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

as an assistant to then-Director Thomas Hoving. Hoving was a controversial figure, a showman's showman who brought the Metropolitan into the blockbuster era, some would say kicking and screaming (he was the mastermind behind the exhibition of Egyptian antiquities that came to be known as "King Tut"). By the time the museum turned to de Montebello, many on the board of trustees were weary of the man the art critic Hilton Kramer had described as a "master of the revels." Whatever the initial perception of de Montebello—and many saw him as relatively weak, perhaps as somebody the board could control—this will surely go down as one of the greatest hires in the history of American museums. Although he may have been brought in to be the anti-showman, de Montebello has reinvented showmanship, demonstrating that it can be intellectually grounded, civic-minded, and fiscally sound.

Pundits say the public will reject Byzantine icons, Renaissance tapestries, and Poussin's landscapes; the Met proves them wrong.

De Montebello—72, tall and elegant, with a deep, French-accented voice that visitors have come to know from the audio tours—was born in Paris, and after World War II emigrated with his family first to Canada and then to the United States, where he attended the Lycée Français in New York and then Harvard. Most of his professional life has been spent at the Metropolitan. He began as a curatorial assistant in the department of European painting in 1963 and, after being named director of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts in 1969, returned to the Met five years later, where he served

In the United States, the Museum of Modern Art, founded in 1929, was the model for a new, multilayered vision of the museum's place in society. The Modern published books and catalogs that largely established the study of modern art as a scholarly discipline; the schedule of temporary exhibitions, both in New York and traveling across the country, shaped our understanding of the major and minor achievements of the 20th century; and the museum became a dynamic social force in the city, through the popularity of its sculpture garden and restaurants as meeting places, and of the programs

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of classes, lectures, and films that acted as a magnet for a growing modern-art-minded public. Quickly, other institutions embraced the approach pioneered at the Modern under its legendary founding director, Alfred H. Barr Jr. For American museums, the half century from the 1930s through the 1970s turned out to be the confident years, a period of seemingly endless growth and prosperity, when the ambitions of the museums were apparently in sync with the ambitions of the country as a whole.

TAPESTRY IN THE BAROQUE: Threads of Splendor
Edited by Thomas P. Campbell
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

ART OF THE CLASSICAL WORLD IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
by Carlos A. Picón et al.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

BYZANTIUM: Faith and Power
by Helen C. Evans et al.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Since then, much has changed. A decline in arts-and-humanities education at all levels and the move of middle-class audiences from the urban centers where museums are generally located have threatened to marginalize museum-going. And museums have found themselves increasingly hemmed in by sharp cuts in corporate giving on one side and a white-hot art market on the other. They have continued to grow in the face of these problems, in part by spotlighting their potential as tourist destinations. Their growth has tended to be strategic, with marquee-style events—that new building plan, that blockbuster show—often masking a shrinking focus on the long-term development of the permanent collection and on the scholarly activities that add weight to an institution. Marketing executives have been given previously unheard-of power, and some organizations are afraid to make a move without consulting focus groups; museum audiences are being treated like nothing so much as guinea pigs.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, one of the greatest in the country, has drastically cut curatorial departments and positions. The Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, in an effort to shore up an endowment to buy contemporary art, sacrificed to the auction block (and almost inevitably to the private sector) great rarities in its holdings of Graeco-Roman and Asian art. (Ironically, one of the Albright-Knox deaccessions, a magnificent classical bronze of Artemis, is currently on display at the Metropolitan, on loan from the European collector who bought it for $25 million.) But certainly the most extreme case of a museum done in by its own supposed marketing savvy is the Guggenheim, which under its former director, Thomas Krens, inaugurated an aggressive expansion plan. This began with a great success—the satellite museum, designed by Frank Gehry, which opened in Bilbao in 1997—but since then Krens's operation has deteriorated, with the Frank Lloyd Wright building in New York now basically a rent-a-rotunda operation for trendy art events, while the museum's permanent collections and scholarly mission are almost entirely sidelined.

Many who have written about the contemporary museum agree that there's too much focus on the business model. It's no wonder that several books critical of the recent drift of events have an ironic *Inc.* in their titles. Paul Werner's *Museum, Inc: Inside the Global Art World* is a rollicking little screed that takes aim at Krens and the Guggenheim. Of Krens's boasts about increased attendance, Werner writes:

> It wasn't clear where attendance had risen, and for what shows, and what the investment had been for each. Besides, the actual space available for exhibitions ballooned in those years, so it's possible the ratio of visitors to square footage actually shrank.

Werner has a good eye for the smoke-and-mirrors of the marketing people and what it often serves to hide, which is a synergy between art museums and corporate ambition that has little to do with

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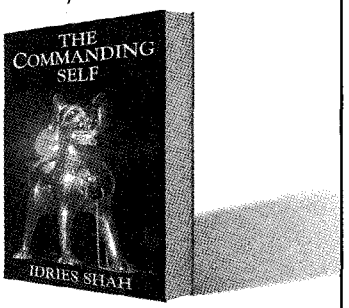

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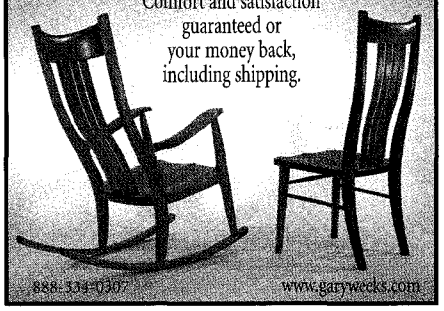
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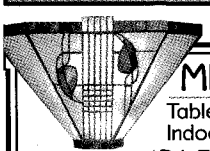
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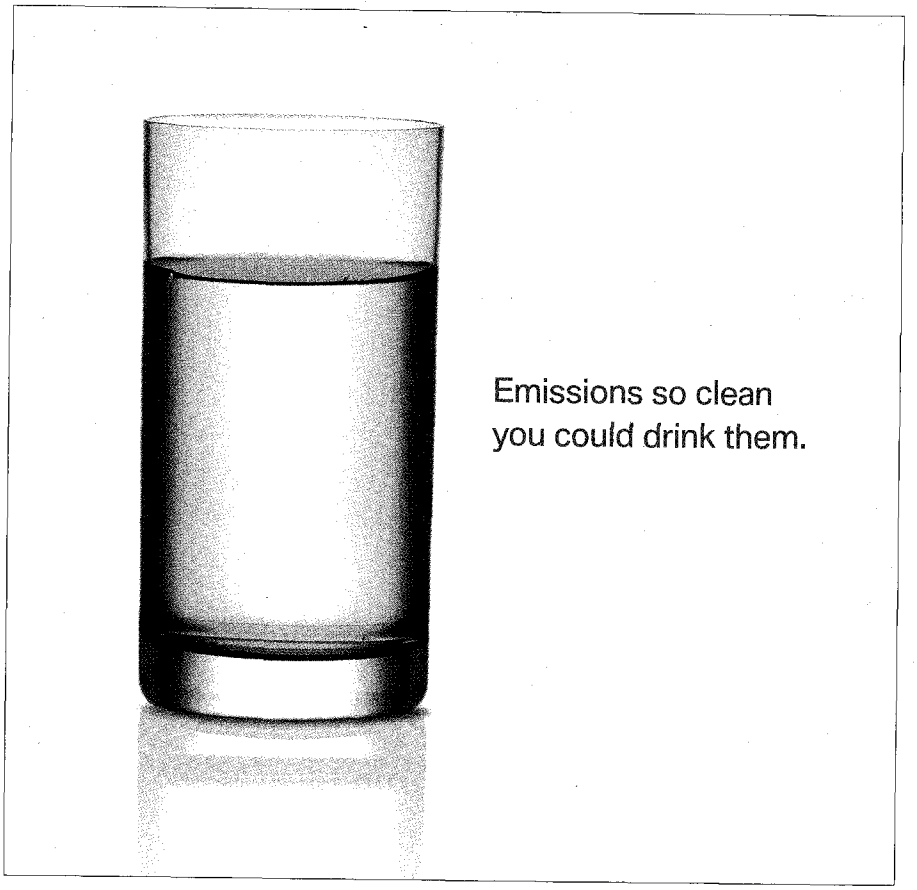

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art itself. Writing after the Enron scandal, Werner points out that several of the lead players, among them Kenneth Lay and Andrew Fastow, were "avid sponsors of contemporary art," experts in what he terms "Cutting-edge Cronyism."

More than any other museum in this country, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has insisted on a coherent sense of purpose—which boils down to the coherence of the museum-going experience. De Montebello's epiphany occurred in 1988, a decade into his directorship, when a great Degas retrospective had opened at the museum. At the time, the Metropolitan was charging a separate admission fee for certain special exhibitions, a practice that remains widespread in the museum world today and that encourages people to visit a temporary show while bypassing the permanent collection, which often contains works far more important than those they've come specially to see. After the Degas show, the Metropolitan abolished this Balkanizing approach, henceforth offering a single admission that covers both the permanent collection and all temporary shows.

"My view," de Montebello told me, "was that you have to be able to encourage people to come many times to a show as great as the Degas retrospective ... If you have only one ticket, which you've paid a lot of money for, you're only going to see the show once. And if you can't come back three or four times, you're not really seeing the show. From the point of view of reaching people—and of civility—tickets and charging was not a good idea. I also felt, from the purely fiscal point of view, that in fact by encouraging return visits, the money you would lose from tickets, you would gain from more visits."

True, the Metropolitan under de Montebello hasn't exactly spurned the sort of bread-and-circus events that PR people love. Last spring's "Superheroes: Fashion and Fantasy," a swankily engineered romp through comic books and designer clothing, is nothing to be proud of, and the museum has produced plenty of this stuff. But at the Metropolitan,

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such shows are never allowed to become the main event, at least not for more than a few weeks. An air of proportion and authority permeates the Metropolitan, which ultimately derives from de Montebello's sense of the authority inherent in great works of art. Although sometimes criticized as elitist, he believes in the populist appeal of elite forms of art, which can speak to many different people in many different ways.

He wants to move museums beyond the boom-or-bust mentality that blockbuster events tend to create. The Metropolitan declines to keep separate profit-and-loss statements for each show; that way, the financial people can't cherry-pick potential moneymakers or dismiss unprofitable exhibitions. "The budget," he says, "is there to support the program"—not the other way around. By offering a truly heterogeneous experience, de Montebello has taken the Metropolitan out of the game of "guess which shows will fill the till," an approach that in museums across the country results in a glut of predictable Impressionist and Picasso splashes. What de Montebello understands is that the public is actually hungering for something else.

The curators who work with de Montebello are used to seeing their dreams realized. Although curators have a largely behind-the-scenes role in museums, they're supremely important figures in the cultural world, and the team at the Metropolitan is the best there is. They oversee the permanent collection, which involves caring for and presenting objects already in the museum, while keeping an eye out for objects on the market or in private collections that might enhance the holdings. They organize temporary shows, often building on the strengths of the permanent collection. And through their writings for catalogs and other publications, they bridge the gap between scholars and the general public, offering a unique synthesis of evolving knowledge. Unlike most museums, the Metropolitan has no exhibition committee. Curators go straight to de Montebello, whose adventurous spirit (he has been known to add last-minute

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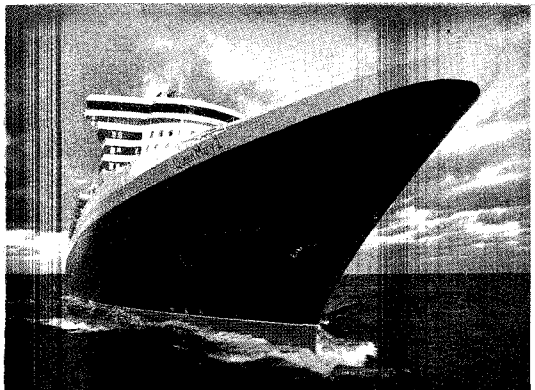

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shows to already overcrowded schedules) makes for an environment in which creative people flourish. People like Carlos Picón, who installed the new Greek and Roman galleries, and Helen Evans, who organized "The Glory of Byzantium," not only are formidable scholars, they also have a sixth sense for the most effective way to present challenging material.

Nobody more thoroughly embodies the headlong creative spirit of the Metropolitan than Keith Christiansen, the Jayne Wrightsman Curator of European Painting—immensely tall, whippet thin, a nonstop talker with an endearing mixture of scholarly authority, aesthetic avidity, and unlimited curiosity. A few years ago, I ran into him at intermission during a performance of *Lohengrin*; under his arm was a paperback of one of Trollope's novels, which he was reading, and he immediately launched into a lyric salute to the wonders of 19th-century fiction. I doubt there's a subject in the arts on which Christiansen wouldn't be able to speak knowledgeably. It was Christiansen who brought Duccio's *Madonna and Child* to de Montebello's attention, thereby initiating what turned out to be a $45 million purchase. Even though his field is Italian Renaissance painting, he delights in leaping centuries and borders. In an important 1996 show, he argued for the dramatic depth of the altarpieces of the 18th-century Venetian painter Giambattista Tiepolo, which many had hitherto thought of as merely magnificent decorations. And a couple of years ago, when he learned that Pierre Rosenberg, the former director of the Louvre, was organizing a show of Poussin landscapes for Spain, he arranged for the exhibition to come to New York. In Christiansen's essay for the catalog of "Poussin and Nature: Arcadian Visions," you can see a curatorial imagination working at the very highest level. In some 25 beautifully reasoned pages, he moves beyond the traditional idea of Poussin as a master of the strictly plotted narrative painting, presenting us with an infinitely more instinctive, intuitive, and maybe even romantic artist. Rosenberg has written the entries for the individual works, and he is a master of the form, creating what amount to miniature essays that unite scholarly exactitude with an easygoing feeling for the underlying humanity of Poussin's work. This catalog, which also contains five essays by as many art historians, becomes a conversation about the many ways to approach a great artist and his relationship with the natural world—a relationship that for Poussin was by turns terrifying and inspiriting, humbling and ennobling. "Poussin and Nature" was a quietly revolutionary show.

> MoMA is a place where huge amounts of money are raised while the essential matter of the museum experience is neglected.

The Metropolitan is a rarity in that younger curators are given a chance to work on a truly ambitious scale. Thomas Campbell was still a relatively new kid on the block when in 2002 he organized and mounted "Tapestry in the Renaissance," the immense and audacious exhibition that irreversibly established the centrality of tapestry in 16th-century art. I asked de Montebello about "Tapestry in the Renaissance" and about Campbell. He recalled that his first thought on hearing Campbell pitch the show was that it was going to cost $2 million. "When has it ever been done?" de Montebello remembers asking. "Never," Campbell replied. Which meant, so far as de Montebello was concerned—even though most people thought 16th-century tapestry was a bore—that it had to be done. And then 9/11 occurred, six months before the opening day—just when all the fund-raising needed to be put in place. As Campbell recalls, "What was already a challenging project

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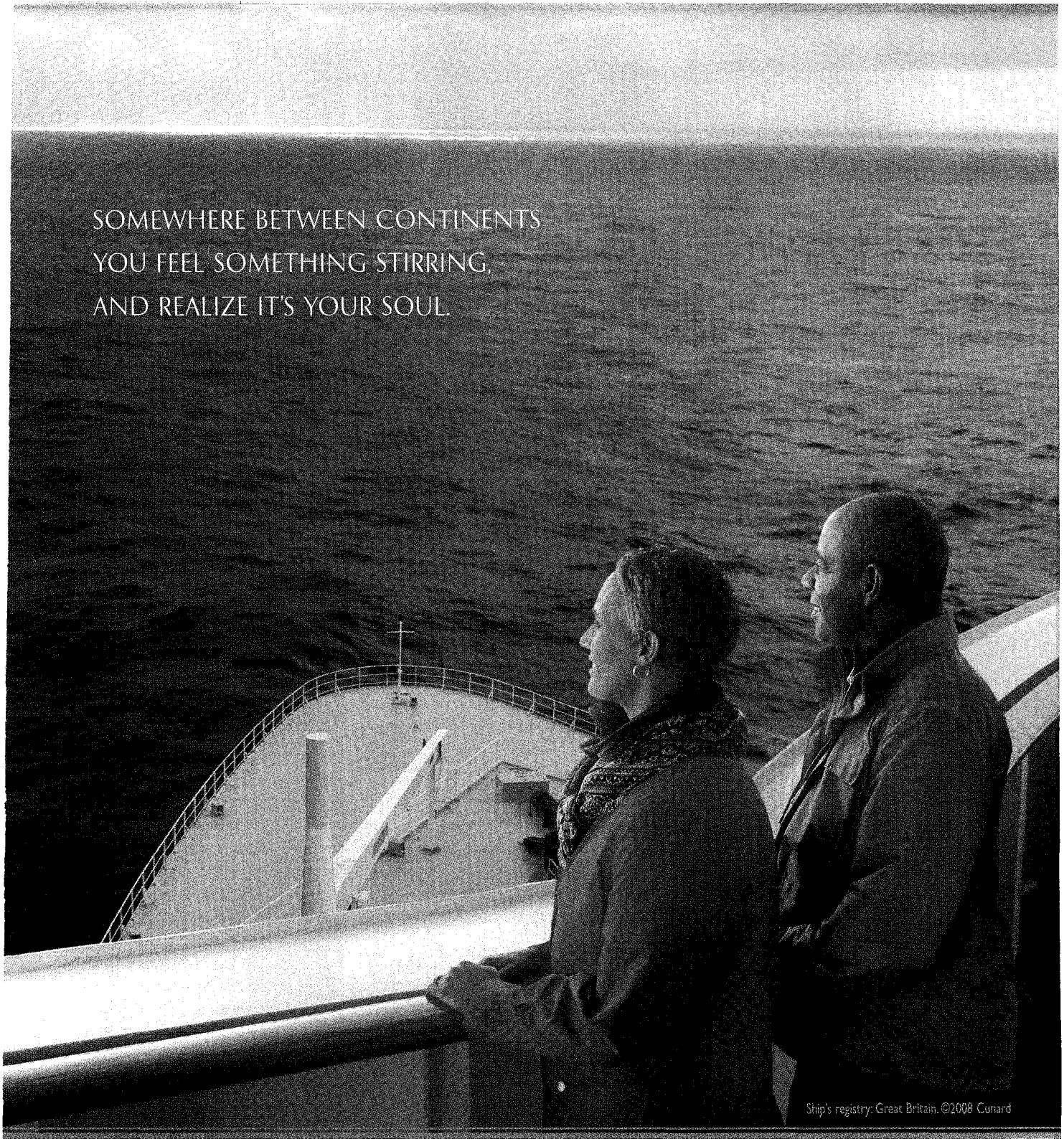

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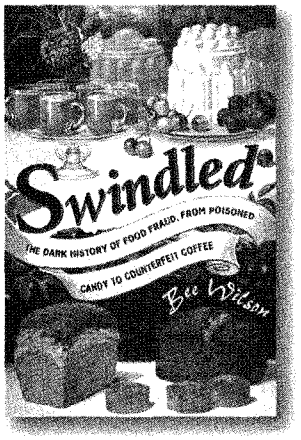

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became an almost impossible one." Again, de Montebello stood firm. "We'll find the money for it. We have to do it." So the museum rallied. When it turned out that some of the tapestries were so big that they would have to come in through the museum's front doors, Harold Holzer, then the head of the press office (he's now the senior vice president for external affairs), got *The Times* to send a photographer—and New Yorkers were put on notice that a spectacle was about to be unfurled. The exhibition turned out to be a scholarly sensation and a hit with the public: "The Greatest Show in Town," as *The New York Review of Books* announced on its cover.

Last year, Campbell mounted an almost equally glorious sequel, "Tapestry in the Baroque," which took the story into the 18th century. And although both shows have now closed, their extraordinary catalogs remain. Recalling the initial conversations about "Tapestry in the Renaissance," de Montebello remembers thinking, "If it bombs, it bombs, but we'll have a great catalog and the only book of its kind on the subject." De Montebello's office is a trove of such catalogs, and he delights in displaying them, jumping up to pull them off the shelves and expressing pride in their heft, their dense endnotes and bibliographies, and their generous indexes. These books—the permanent record of exquisitely plotted, dazzling but perforce fleeting exhibits—are perhaps de Montebello's most lasting achievement. Seeing "Tapestry in the Renaissance" convinced me that the vast hunt scenes designed by Bernaert van Orley around 1530 and realized by the weavers of Brussels are among the masterworks of European art, panoramas of a richness and intricacy and poetic loveliness rivaling those of Brueghel. In his catalogs, Campbell, assisted by contributions from many of the best scholars in the field, helps us understand why such astonishing works could be so undervalued. The tradition of art writing that began with Vasari, he explains, tended to downplay the collaborative activity of the Belgian tapestry artists. Also, those who later celebrated tapestry, like William

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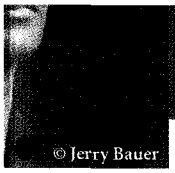

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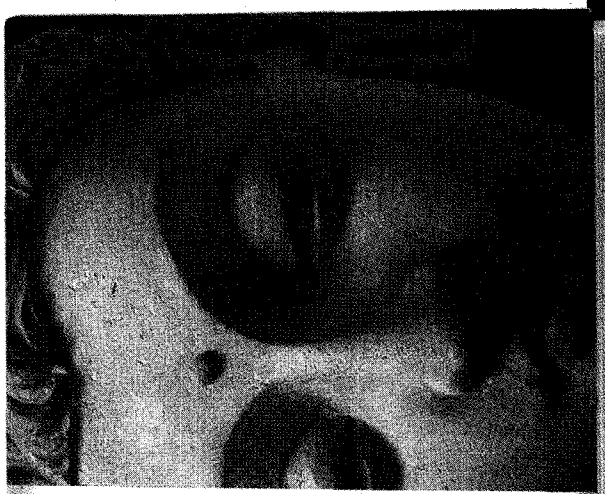

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Morris, the prophet of the Arts and Crafts movement in 19th-century England, wanted to see tapestry as more purely decorative than it is in the work of a great storyteller like van Orley.

An encyclopedic museum in the heart of a world-class city has advantages that other institutions do not. When I asked de Montebello what he would do if he were put in charge of a smaller institution—a museum in a midsize city, say, with one or two masterworks and a fine but second-string collection—he was unfazed. He said he would focus on smaller exhibitions that showcased the best things in the collection; such shows aren't expensive, and they give a museum a chance to bring in scholars from other institutions as it's drawing local attention to its permanent collection. This is precisely what some of the savviest museums in the country are doing right now.

There are of course no simple answers, certainly not in the high-cost world of museums. It's not even always clear to whom, exactly, our museums belong. When we speak of a great museum as a public institution, we aren't necessarily speaking with much precision. Technically, the board of trustees of the Metropolitan owns the museum's collections—and this is not an unusual situation. While everybody on museum boards wants to serve the public good, each may have different ideas about the nature of that good. A great many board members come from the business world, where it's believed that if you aren't growing, you're dying; this helps explain the endless building plans and blockbuster schemes, and even the deaccessioning of works, as if any kind of activity were better than none at all. Repeatedly in recent years, some big ego has thwarted a museum board, the most recent example being Eli Broad at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art—who, after paying for a museum-within-the-museum that bears his own name, announced that he would not in fact donate his collection. Many around the Metropolitan cite its board, relatively large and famously stable, as a source of strength. But in the years to come, the

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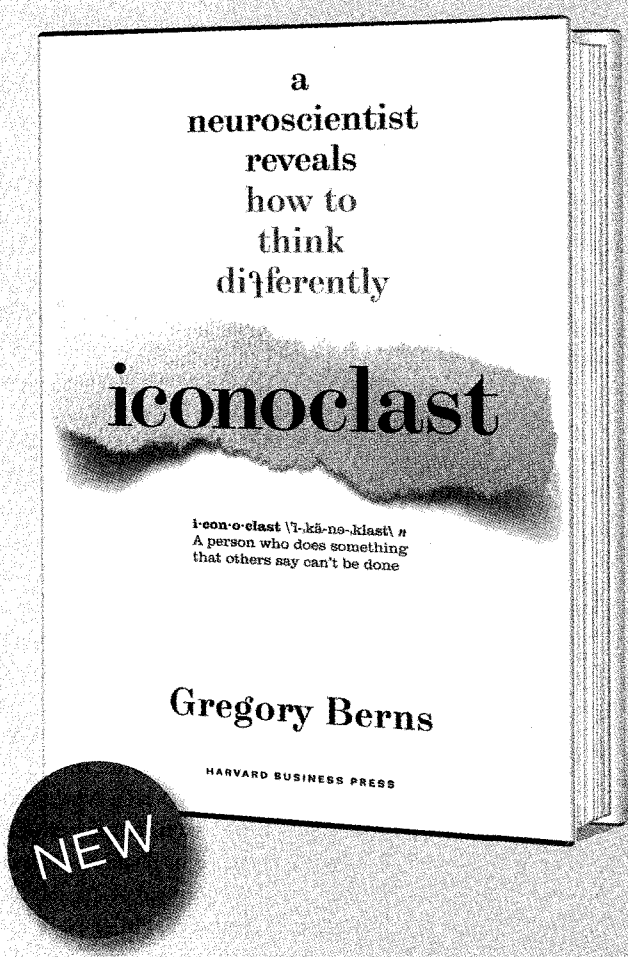

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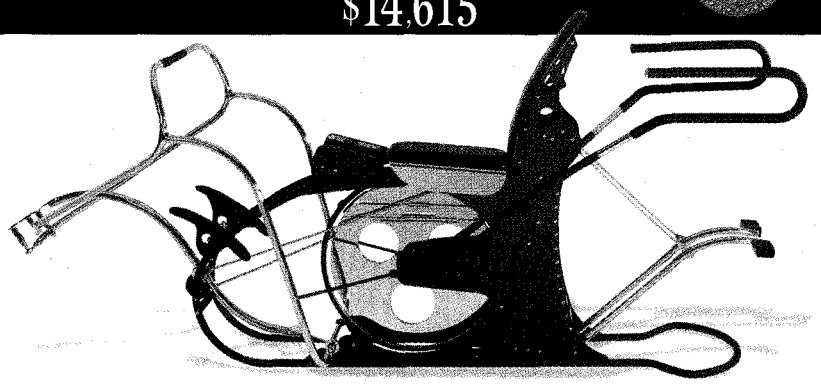

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Metropolitan may conceivably be unable to withstand the pressures from a new generation of billionaires who tend to take an interest in contemporary art and who are used to getting their way. De Montebello departs at a time when Steven Cohen, a hedge-fund wizard, has already lent a Damien Hirst and two works by Jeff Koons to this museum, which is only beginning to develop a clear direction in its contemporary-art collection, and if we have learned anything in recent years, it is that few arts institutions are immune to the pressures that can be exerted by a certain kind of gonzo personality.

The trustees at the Metropolitan who are leading the search for a new director, a group headed by Annette de la Renta, have to be acutely aware that the museum's future health depends on the board's dynamic interaction with that new director. This is a complex relationship, for although the director serves at the board's pleasure, a great director should in fact be shaping the board's expectations. And if the trustees at the Metropolitan have any doubt as to what kind of a director they do not want, they need only look 30 blocks south, to the Museum of Modern Art, where Glenn Lowry, who has been director since 1995, has been reshaping the Modern as a business-model museum, a place where huge amounts of money are raised and large crowds are attracted while more and more of the essential matter of the museum experience is neglected. One of the ironies of the past 20 or so years has been that these two premier New York museums have in some sense switched places, with the Modern, once the more adventuresome, increasingly timid and mainstream in its thinking, while the Metropolitan becomes bolder and more innovative. When de Montebello says, "If you take the high road, you pull up your public," he's speaking the language of the great figures who once dominated the Modern, people like Alfred Barr and William Rubin, a language that is more or less dead on West 53rd Street. New York's artists long owed their deepest allegiance to the Modern. But now they and

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the city's most avid museumgoers really feel at home at the Metropolitan. Even in areas where the Modern once reigned supreme, such as the history of photography, the excitement has more and more been at the Metropolitan, which has mounted a definitive Walker Evans retrospective and unforgettable shows of French daguerreotypes and of English photographs from paper negatives.

The Met may be unable to withstand the pressures from billionaires who are used to getting their way.

Now well over a century old, the Metropolitan, like any institution with a long history, must simultaneously embrace what is best from its past while reimagining itself for the present and the future. No event in recent years has demonstrated the museum's capacity to realize this Janus-faced vision better than the reopening of the now-dazzling Greek and Roman galleries last year, for here everything old is, quite literally, new again. You have only to take a look at the catalog published on this occasion—*Art of the Classical World in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*—to see how conscious a process was at work. Carlos Picón opens this volume with "A History of the Department of Greek and Roman Art." Don't be put off by that dry title; in the historical photographs that Picón has gathered and in his account of 125 years of collecting is the story of the Metropolitan's heroic efforts to establish in the New World a remarkable record of the achievements of the Old—a record now housed in one of the most delightful, coolly elegant spaces in Manhattan.

Although many of de Montebello's triumphs, like the new Greek and Roman galleries, have involved the art of the past, he recognizes the pressure of the present. Under his watch, not only has the museum's involvement with photography grown enormously, but the Metropolitan has acquired highly significant 20th-century art, including one of Balthus's greatest paintings, *The Mountain*—an evocation of a Biedermeier afternoon in the Alps, but with the pleasures of the hiking party somehow becoming atomized, troubled, surreal. Museumgoers will see connections between this painting, completed in 1937, and Courbet's *Young Ladies of the Village*, from 1851. And it is precisely that kind of connection that de Montebello wants to encourage visitors to recognize. Nothing makes him happier than when an important object in the museum inspires a curator to organize an exhibition—and when that show in turn gives birth to another show. In this and other ways, the museum maintains an ongoing conversation with the hundreds of thousands of museumgoers for whom a trip to the Metropolitan isn't an occasional event but a regular and vital part of their lives. In the catalog for "Byzantium: Faith and Power," de Montebello describes the show, mounted in 2004, as

> the third wing of a "triptych" of exhibitions dedicated to a fuller understanding of the art of the Byzantine Empire, whose cultural and political influence spanned more than a millennium.

That show—together with "The Age of Spirituality" and "The Glory of Byzantium"—exemplified the director's vision of the museum as a kind of crossroads, where art of many times and places comes alive in the present. Helen Evans's immense catalog for "Byzantium: Faith and Power" is as gloriously overstuffed as was the exhibition it accompanied. The sections devoted to stone sculpture, metalwork, icon painting, mosaics, and textiles could stand as substantial books in themselves. And Maryan Ainsworth, a curator of painting at the Metropolitan, contributes a brilliant essay on the impact of Byzantine icons on Gerard David, Jan van Eyck, and other European painters during the

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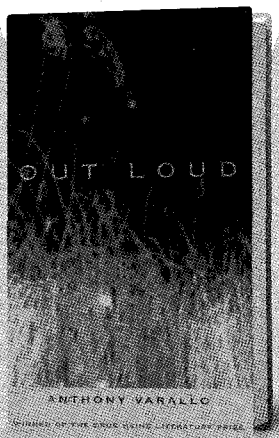

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Northern Renaissance. A catalog such as this is an intellectual and artistic binge—but a binge without excess. And that, come to think of it, is a fair description of the Metropolitan Museum of Art today.

How long the Metropolitan's golden age will last, nobody can know. Continuing it, even for a time, is going to require a director who can harness the best traditions of American museum-going, with its dazzling merger of populism and elitism. This is a juggling act, no question about it, infinitely more difficult than de Montebello has ever been willing to let us see.

A little more than a century ago, Henry James, on his last trip to America, visited the Metropolitan, which was by then established on Fifth Avenue, and he saw a museum involved in a major housecleaning, eliminating third- and fourth-rate stuff. In *The American Scene*, his resplendent account of the United States at the dawn of the 20th century, James wrote:

> The thought of the acres of canvas and the tons of marble to be turned out into the cold world as the penalty of old error and the warrant for a clean slate ought to have drawn tears from the eyes. But these impending incidents affected me, in fact, on the spot, as quite radiant demonstrations. The Museum, in short, was going to be great.

And so it would be. The first half of the 20th century was the age of collecting, when the Metropolitan acquired the lion's share of its Old Master paintings, classical statues, Byzantine ivories, and Impressionist works. But in the past 20 years, more than ever before, the museum has demonstrated the power the individual object can still exert in a society where mass marketing rules. The climactic purchase of the de Montebello years is the Duccio *Madonna and Child*, less than 12 inches high—a modest yet monumental gold-leafed panel to remind us of the golden age that has flourished on Fifth Avenue in the very midst of all the follies of America's new Gilded Age.

Jed Perl is the art critic for *The New Republic*. His new book, *Antoine's Alphabet: Watteau and His World*, has just been published by Knopf.

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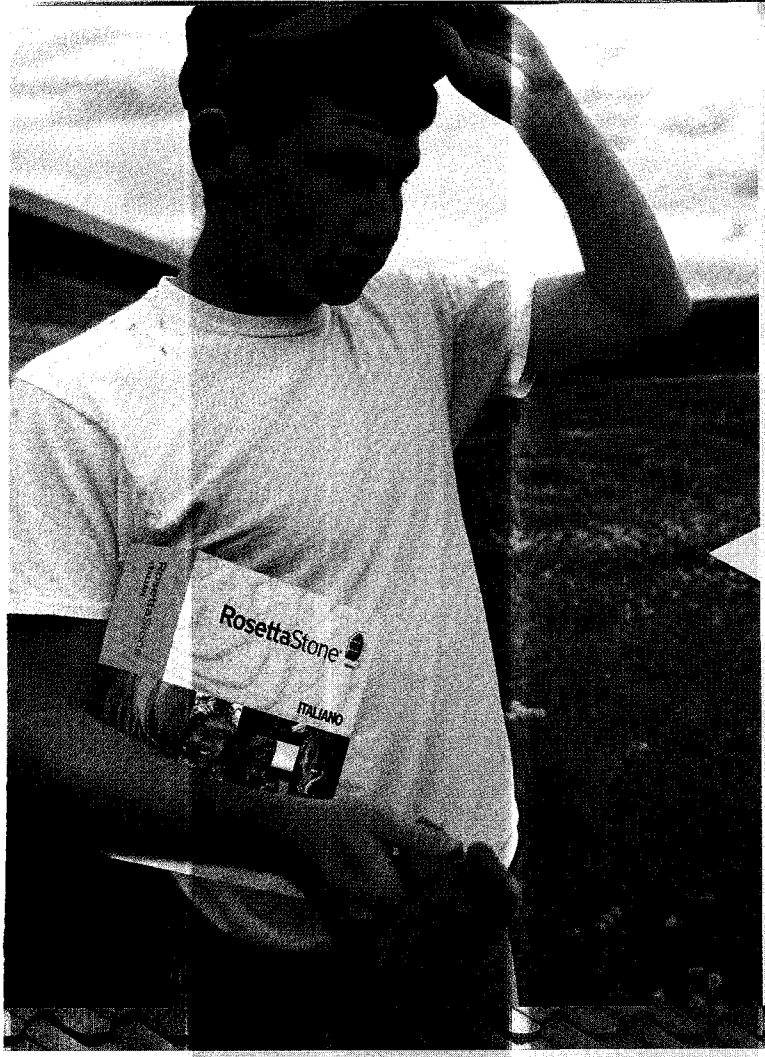

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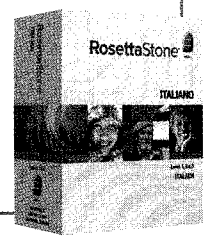

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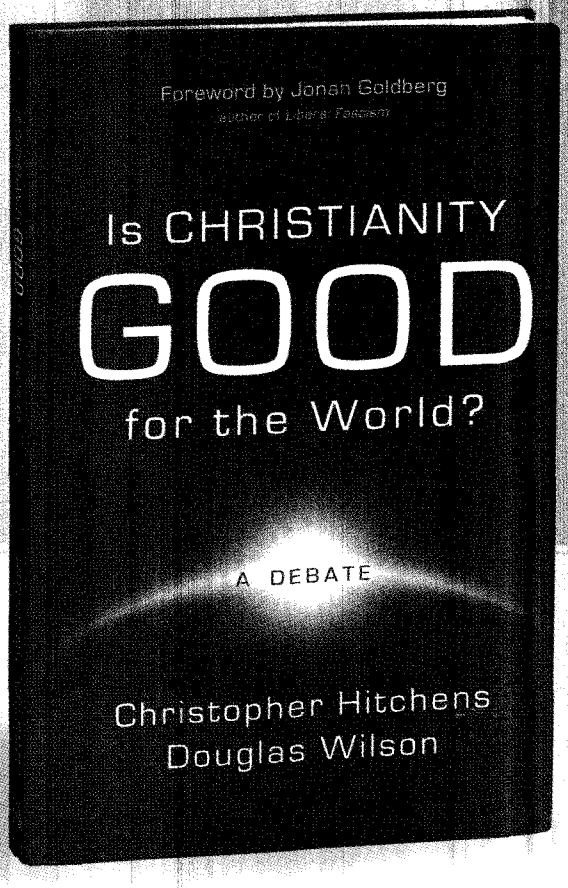

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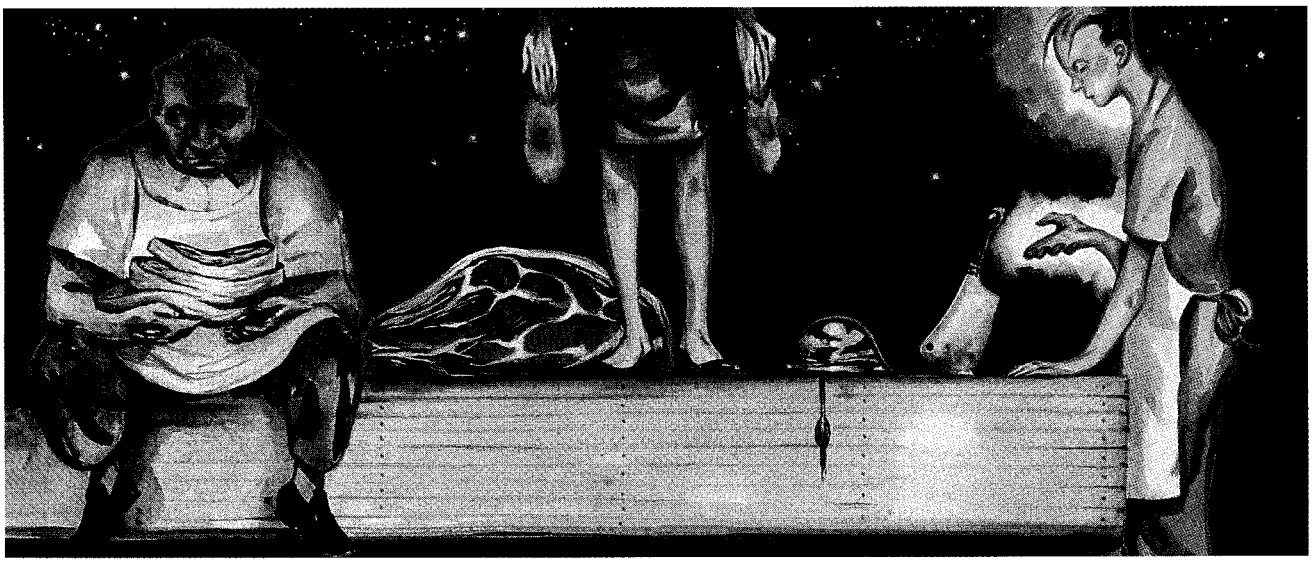

BOOKS

The narrator of Roth's *Indignation* may die off early and horribly—but it's the reader of this adolescent work who ought to feel the most outraged.

Nasty, Brutish, and Short

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Before he decided to dispense entirely with the respect of his readership—which must have been, oh, some years ago now—Philip Roth used to try to balance the quotidian with a larger theme. In novels like *I Married a Communist* and *The Plot Against America*, he sought to mesh the "micro"—most usually the familiar world of Jewish angst in New Jersey—with the "macro": the successive spasms of alarm and disorder that have punctuated modern American history.

In *Indignation*, he varies the procedure a little. Young Marcus Messner, in whose voice the book is narrated, is indeed an anxious Jewish youth from New Jersey, apprenticing in his father's kosher butcher shop. But the action of the novel requires that he be deracinated and replanted in no less a setting than Winesburg, Ohio, "eighteen miles from Lake Erie and five hundred miles from our back door's double lock." His move is dictated by the need to escape his father's demented overprotectiveness, a neurosis probably exacerbated by the rumors of a dreadful war in Korea. This conflict—the gruesome stories of its bayonet charges and hand-to-hand slaughter putting him again in mind of the family butchery—bears directly on Marcus, who is liable for the draft. He knows, having lost two cousins to infantry fighting in the Second World War, that grunts have much less chance of survival than junior officers. He is therefore enrolled in the ROTC. Meanwhile, he studies political science and American government and waits tables at a local inn.

It will not surprise you to learn that this urban Jewish boy's existence in such a bucolic WASP world is occasionally fraught:

> More than a few times during the first weeks, I thought I heard myself being summoned to one of the rowdier tables with the words "Hey, Jew! Over here!" But, preferring to believe the words spoken had been simply "Hey, you! Over here!" I persisted with my duties, determined to abide by the butcher-shop lesson learned from my father: slit the ass open and stick your hand up and grab the viscera and pull them out; nauseating and disgusting, but it had to be done.

In other words, Messner doesn't quite have the knack of making things easy on himself. He quarrels with the Jewish boys with whom he is first made to room, and evinces a Holden Caulfield–like disdain for sharing with others at close quarters. Meanwhile, the reverses suffered by American forces in Korea, and the controversy over President Truman's dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, have the local consequence of making it imperative that he lose his virginity with all speed:

> There—yet another goal: despite the trammels of convention still rigidly holding sway on the campus of a middling little midwestern college

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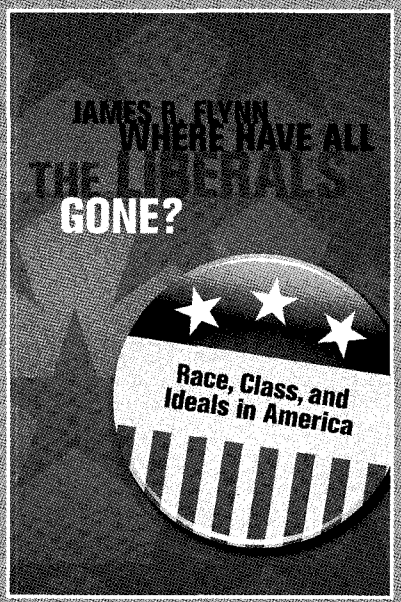

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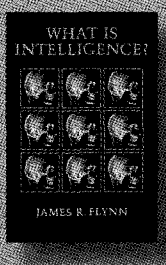

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> in the years immediately after World War Two, I was determined to have intercourse before I died.

The ordinariness of the prose here ("trammels holding sway" and all that) is matched by the familiarity of the Eros/Thanatos dialectic. But Roth takes things a step further, revealing that his narrator is speaking posthumously:

> And even dead, as I am and have been for I don't know how long, I try to reconstruct the mores that reigned over that campus and to recapitulate the troubled efforts to elude those mores that fostered the series of mishaps ending in my death at the age of nineteen.

Beginning with that rather breathless and rudderless sentence, Messner goes on to enlighten us by revealing that eternity is a constant hashing-over of the details of former existence. And which details might these tend to be? I think that I shall give away very little if I disclose that blow jobs and hand jobs, administered by a sweet but unstable shiksa, play a not inconsiderable part in Roth's version of "memory cogitating for eons on itself."

INDIGNATION
by Philip Roth
Houghton Mifflin

At all events, at about the one-fifth mark in the novel's progress, we are abruptly made aware that Marcus Messner isn't going to make it, and indeed hasn't made it. How does he, as unreliable, not to say inanimate, narrator, contrive to fill the remaining time? Apart from a brief and sordid dalliance with the aforementioned shiksa—who is called Olivia and who turns out to have suicidal tendencies—he engages in warfare against the compulsory Christianity of the college. It has, apparently, come as a complete shock to him to learn that chapel attendance is mandatory and that he must listen to sermons and hymns. His outrage gives us the key to the book's title. As a mantra with which to ward off the cadences of the Baptists, he sings to himself the Chinese national anthem, which he was taught as a patriotic duty during grade school in the Second World War. A stave of it goes: "Indignation fills the hearts of all our countrymen, / Arise! Arise! Arise!" and Messner finds the four-beat word *Indignation* to be especially heartening in his Kulturkampf with the dean of men. At one stage he quotes almost verbatim and at length from Bertrand Russell's celebrated polemic "Why I Am Not a Christian"; one might wonder how a young man so determinedly and militantly agnostic would not have taken better care not to attend a piously Christian school.

The stress of all this helps to land Marcus in the infirmary, where his mother—already a martyr to her husband's paranoia—comes to visit. Her emotional lecture makes one inquire if there is not supposed to be something onomatopoeic about the boy's surname. "You are here" at Winesburg, she insists, "so you don't have to be a Messner like your grandfather and your father and your cousins and work in a butcher shop for the rest of your life." Then, later, after she has reproached him for keeping company with the wrist-slashing Olivia:

> You are a Messner like all the Messners ... The Messners aren't just a family of butchers. They're a family of shouters and a family of screamers and a family of putting their foot down and banging their heads against the wall, and now, out of the blue, your father is as bad as the rest of them.

A couple of pungent throwbacks to *Portnoy*—including a nasty scene with a piece of liver (though not as explicit as Alex's imperishable encounter with that viscous telltale organ) and a vivid episode of self-abuse involving a sock—persuade me that a messy name is indeed part of the drab psychoanalytic furniture of this rather knocked-together novelette.

Indeed, it's almost because of the involuntary mess that Marcus makes by vomiting in the dean's office, and the deliberate mess made of Marcus's clothes and belongings by a gruesomely insanitary roommate, that the climax of the tale becomes a weird blend of the

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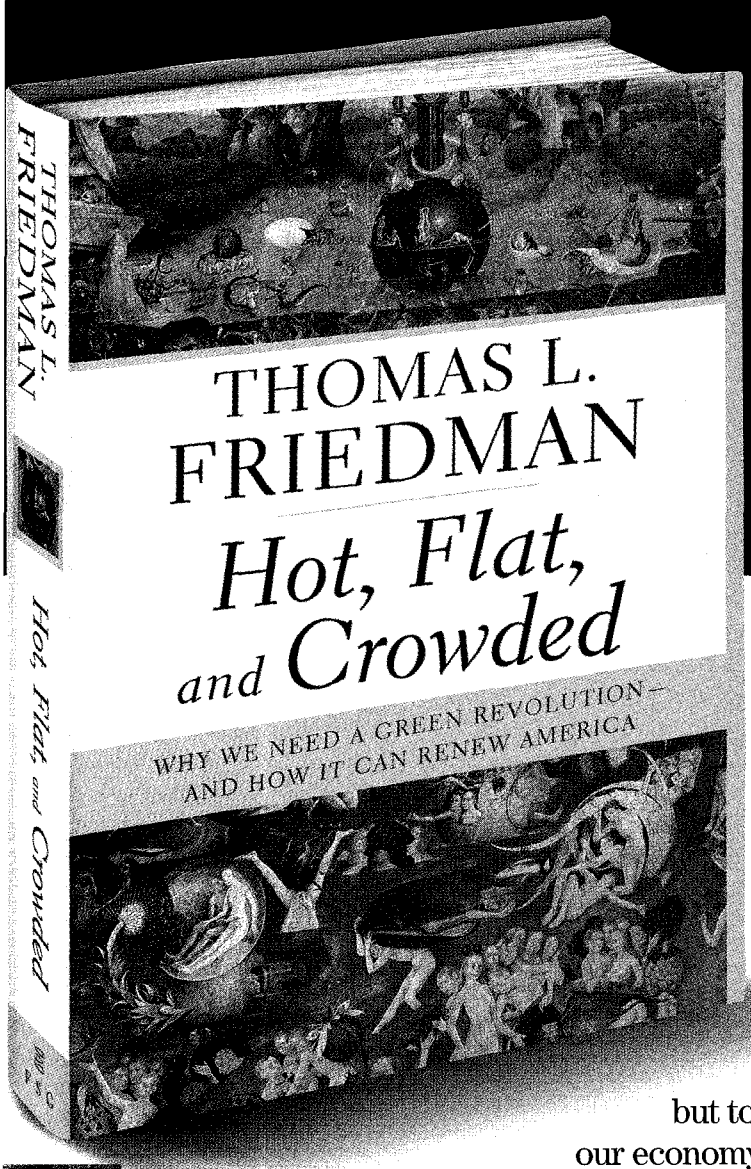

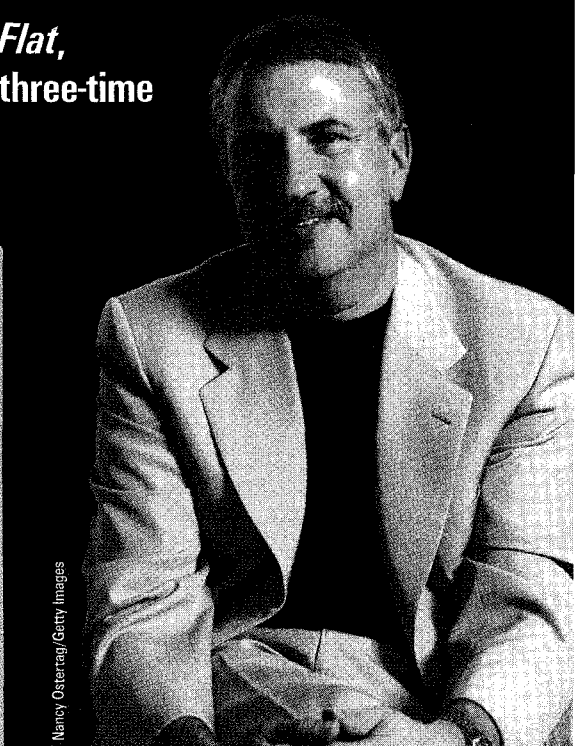
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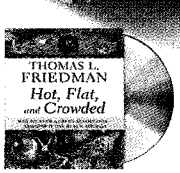

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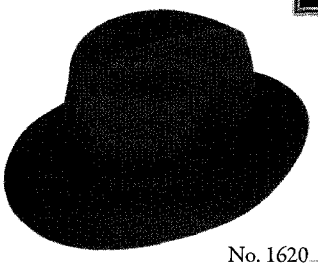

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dirty and the purgative: a sniggering panty raid that gets out of hand, but one that takes place in a white and obliterating blizzard. The male student body—if that's the right term—of Winesburg takes leave of its collective senses and launches a sort of underwear pogrom that goes on for pages:

> "Panties! Panties! Panties!" The word, still as inflammatory for them as college students as it had been at the onset of puberty, constituted the whole of the cheer exultantly repeated from below ... Among the myriad objects seen dropping from the open windows that night were brassieres, girdles, sanitary napkins, ointment tubes, lipsticks, slips and half-slips, nighties ...

Reviewing Roth's *Exit Ghost* in these pages some months ago, I speculated that he sometimes urged his flagging prose along by giving himself something to jerk off about: in extremis, the very word *panties* was enough to bring young Alexander Portnoy to the sorry peak of yet another shuddering and solitary ejaculation. I lost count of the number of times Roth summoned the same magic term in this, the most hard-working and hard-worked passage of his latest book. So much effort, alas, for such scant effect.

The closing pages are by turns bizarre and strenuous, and in a manner that took me some time to decipher. As order regains its throne at Winesburg, and the young men succumb to a shamefaced realization of what they have done, Messner shouts out to his parents and his girlfriend, only to understand that he is now beyond the veil and has no audience:

> There is only myself to address about my innocence, my explosions, my candor, and the extreme brevity of bliss in the first true year of my young manhood and the last year of my life. The urge to be heard, and nobody to hear me! I am dead. The unpronounceable sentence pronounced.

If I am not wrong, this is an allusion or *hommage* to Dalton Trumbo's antiwar classic, *Johnny Got His Gun*, wherein a maimed soldier, rigidly comatose, is agonizingly aware of his surroundings while utterly unable to communicate even a hint of his own sentience to those around his bed. Our last glimpse of Marcus Messner is of a butchered figure, alive only in a morphine-induced dream, lying moribund on a Korean hillside that has just been stormed by Chinese soldiers yelling the "Indignation" anthem.

Roth gives the best lines in valediction to a pro-war speechmaker, the unpolished Republican pol Albin Lentz, who is the president of Winesburg College. Addressing his chastened male students in the aftermath of the panty scandal, Lentz showers them with scorn and contempt and compares their easy and silly hedonistic life to the Spartan tasks that await American manhood in the war against Communism. Here, Thanatos is being positively deployed against Eros. It's quite clear from the context that Roth doesn't in the least approve of Lentz's sentiments, so it is all the more impressive that he awards him so much honor and gives such space to his grapeshot rhetoric.

Finally, a conundrum. Sherwood Anderson actually grew up in, and wrote about, the town of Clyde, Ohio, but his miniatures and microcosms were collectively titled *Winesburg*, and I shall be obliged to any reader who can make any suggestion as to why Roth chose to pick this of all midwestern towns as his setting. Writing about Anderson, John Updike was put in mind of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, which demonstrated that "small-town people think a lot about the universe (as opposed to city people, who think only about each other)." And E. M. Forster said that *Winesburg*'s characters "live and breathe: they are beautiful." It was perhaps incautious of Roth to booby-trap this very slight novel with clues to more serious and moving work by others. The characters in *Indignation* are for the most part thin and flimsy, and the contrived relationship between the local and the cosmic, or the local and the global, finally manages only to produce a mainly storm-in-a-teacup effect.

Christopher Hitchens is an *Atlantic* contributing editor and a *Vanity Fair* columnist.

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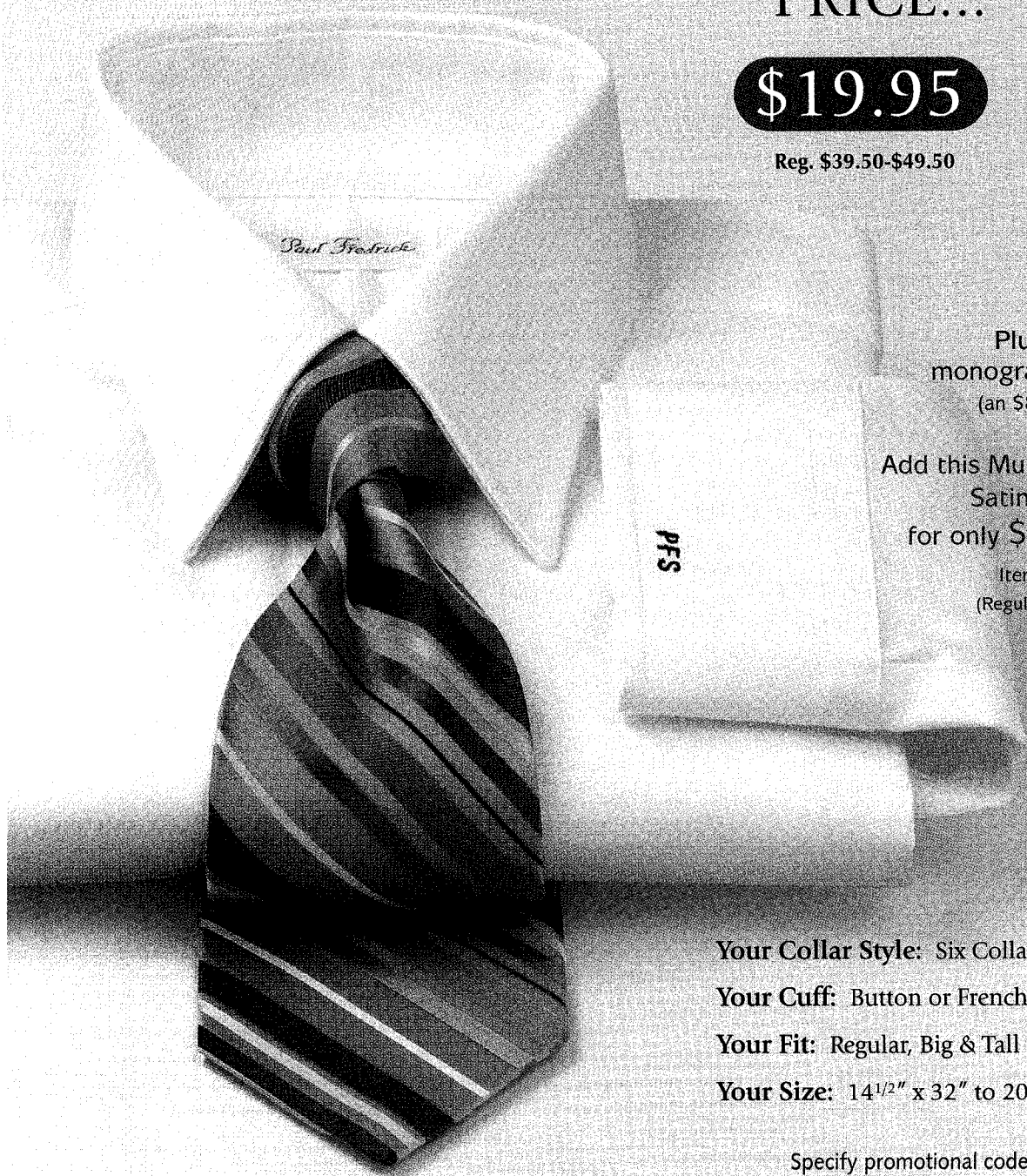

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BOOKS

A guide to additional releases

COVER to COVER

BIOGRAPHY

Cecil B. DeMille: A Life in Art
by Simon Louvish (St. Martin's)
From the days when motion pictures actually flickered, in the 20th century's teens, to the glories of 1950s Technicolor epics, DeMille's role in the industry's evolution was decisive. Louvish intelligently assesses this aspect of his subject, but he also roams further afield into such topics as the fabled director's right-wing politics, his Jewish ancestry, and his surprising family connection to the radical economic thinker Henry George. A half century after his death, DeMille is ready for another close-up, and this is as good a one as we're likely to get for some time.

Prince Rupert: The Last Cavalier
by Charles Spencer (Trafalgar Square)
The hundreds of millions of people around the world who heard Charles Spencer's eulogy at his sister Princess Diana's funeral know that he has a way with words. This talent is evident throughout his biography of the Stuart prince who fought so flamboyantly but with mixed success in the Thirty Years' War and on behalf of his uncle, the doomed Charles I, in the English Civil War. Spencer is adept at evoking the brutal realities of 17th-century warfare but is also skilled at portraiture, not only of Rupert but also of the host of other characters, major and minor, swirling through his maelstrom of a life.

Hidden in the Shadow of the Master: The Model-Wives of Cézanne, Monet, & Rodin
by Ruth Butler (Yale)
This judicious, exhaustively researched, and gracefully written study examines the three women who played essential, although hitherto overlooked, roles in the evolution of three great artists. Grounding her subjects' stories in their cultural and sociological climate, Butler nicely demonstrates how feminist historiography can illuminate the life and work of male figures as well.

Mandela: Struggle and Triumph
by David Turnley (Abrams)
The subtitle is indeed accurate, for this book essentially concludes with Mandela's election as South Africa's president, in 1994. It focuses on how he got there, neglecting what he did—and did not—achieve in office. The author, an American photojournalist, expresses warm thanks to Mandela's largely discredited ex-wife, Winnie, who is oddly prominent in these pages. Dogged and admirable as Mandela's fight for justice was, his legacy is inseparable from how he united, governed, and led his country, so this portrait seems both out of date and partial, despite its evocative photographs and trenchant (though sparse) commentary.

SOCIETY *and* CULTURE

Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations
by Susan Sessions Rugh (Kansas)
A singularly middle-class American phenomenon, the family road trip enjoyed a roughly three-decade boom, from the 1940s, when rationing ended and the economy mended, to the 1970s, when the gasoline crisis did irreparable damage to the summer ritual. Rugh, a history professor at Brigham Young (whose style blessedly stints on academese), treats this period of post–World War II innocence—or Cold War escapism, depending on one's point of view—with a healthy revisionism minus any smudge of sepia sentimentality. Instead, she erects a sturdy factual lattice that undergirds her social theorizing on domestic tourism (paid vacation leave, increased car ownership, and the nascent interstate highway system conspired to make the bourgeois practice all but inevitable); changing social norms (the Boomer factor, the work/play dialectic); and the environmental, religious, and racial realities of the time (including the roadside inequalities that may have jump-started the civil-rights movement). Smart and sensitive, well researched and no-nonsense, Rugh's ride is well worth taking.

Punctuated Equilibrium
by Stephen Jay Gould (Harvard Belknap)
The untimely death of Stephen Jay Gould deprived the world of a superb writer and popularizer of important events and processes in biology. But Gould was also a genuinely original thinker, capable of challenging even basic tenets of Darwinian notions of evolution. This latest posthumous volume, which was the central chapter of his magnum opus, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*, argues that Darwin's theory of a steady continuum of evolutionary progress was incorrect. Rather, Gould posits, most species have originated during punctuated geologic moments, and persisted through the periods of stasis that followed. Just as, more than a century ago, quantum theory proved that in physics, things sometimes moved forward in spurts, Gould intuited that this was also true for aspects of evolutionary biology.

The Edible Series
(Chicago)
Hamburger: A Global History
by Andrew F. Smith
Pizza: A Global History
by Carol Helstosky
Pancake: A Global History
by Ken Albala
A timely retort to gourmandism run amok, the first three titles in this chapbook series aim—nobly if quaintly—to illuminate and elevate taken-for-granted staples via concise, discrete histories. As such,

PETER HOEY

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Hamburger is equal parts myth debunker and modernization theorizer; *Pizza* traces transatlantic classism, corporate globalization, and methodology-as-variety; and *Pancake* offers an iterative look at comfort food, cultural controversy, and appellative breadth. As might be expected, however, the value of a given volume depends less on the intrinsic interest of the foodstuff in question than on the ability of the writer considering it (Smith's lively tone is the most appetizing, Helstosky's lukewarm but palatable, Albala's overcooked and hard to swallow). While each title is fairly bursting with facts, figures, and recipes, the casual reader would do well to consider his or her particular appetite—and to perhaps peer into the kitchen—before coming to the table.

HISTORY

For the Love of Animals: The Rise of the Animal Protection Movement
by Kathryn Shevelow (Henry Holt)
Few issues inspire more mammalian passion and ire than animal ethics—a fact that may seem, to many of today's readers, only right and natural. But such was not always the case, explains Shevelow, a scholar of all things 18th-century and British who, in this vital new volume, begins in a time of merciless, bestial benightedness, then discovers the unlikely roots of the anticruelty movement—nobles, parliamentarians, antislavery crusaders, evangelicals, and scientists who found common cause in decency—and follows them to full modern flower (advocacy, protection, legislation). Shevelow lovingly tells the story of assorted luminary reformers: Samuel Pepys, Alexander Pope, William Hogarth, Samuel Johnson, William Wilberforce. The resultant tome is a carefully constructed history, a sometimes shocking social narrative (veined with unexpected, though welcome, humor), and a heartfelt encomium to a once-radical movement's principles. Ultimately, and essentially, though, it's a warm-blooded, well-reasoned plea for humaneness.

Cold War at 30,000 Feet
by Jeffrey A. Engel (Harvard)
This book recounts Britain's challenge to American hegemony in the production of airliners during the years after the Second World War. *Ho hum*, you'd think. But with a cast of colorful characters—among them Ernest Bevin, Dean Acheson, and John Maynard Keynes—and acute glimpses into how things worked in postwar Washington, this chronicle of an intense commercial struggle gives readers a fascinating glimpse into a forgotten cranny of history.

Paradise Lost: Smyrna 1922
by Giles Milton (Basic)
Turkey today is considered the most tolerant Islamic society in the world, but it was not always so. The Armenian genocide during the First World War, which the Turks still refuse to acknowledge, was hardly an isolated incident. The ancient city of Smyrna (now called Izmir) was a polyglot haven of tolerance where Jews, Muslims, and Greek and Armenian Christians lived peaceably together for centuries. But in a few terrible days at the conclusion of the Greco-Turkish War, in 1922, victorious Turkish troops burned the city, killing more than 100,000 non-Muslim civilians. Milton tells his story with a precision that coolly elucidates the enormity of this event, witnessed by American and European naval forces operating under strict nonintervention orders.

Rivals
by Bill Emmott (Harcourt)
In a chatty but serious study, Emmott, a former editor of *The Economist*, details the growing competition among China, India, and Japan. Emmott sees them as more concerned with besting one another than with supplanting the United States, and he paints an alarming picture of potential conflicts among them and also with smaller states like Pakistan and North Korea. But there's no doubt as to this book's target: the überpower across the Pacific, "the world's chief bearer of burdens and payer of prices." U.S. foreign policy for well over a century has been aimed at preventing any Asian power from dominating the continent, and it seems that to achieve Emmott's rosy scenario of Japan, China, and India as harmonious permanent members of the UN Security Council, Uncle Sam is going to have to keep stepping up to the plate—forever. For all the talk of these nations' power potential, the book makes them out to be squabbling, if dangerous, children in need of a firm parental hand from Washington to keep them in line.

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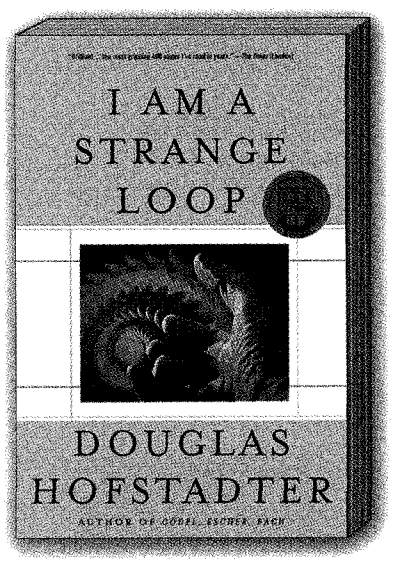

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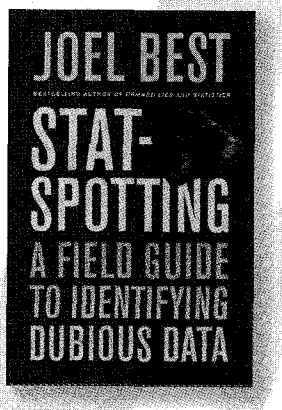

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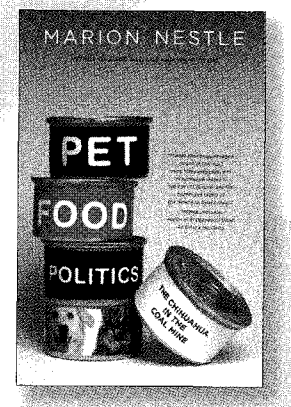

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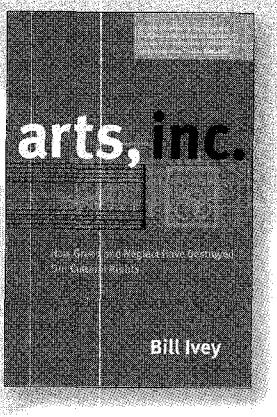

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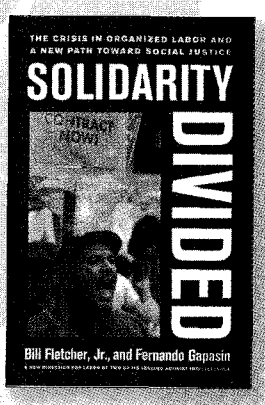

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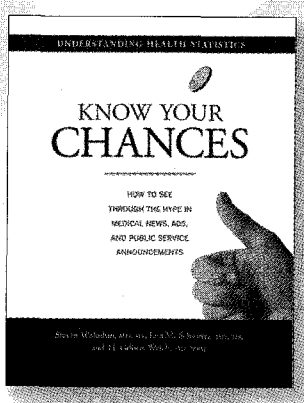

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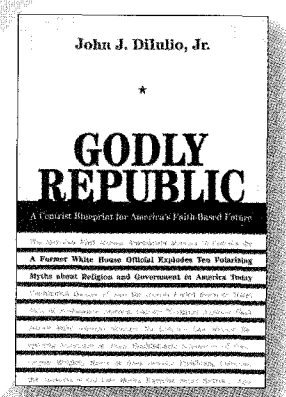

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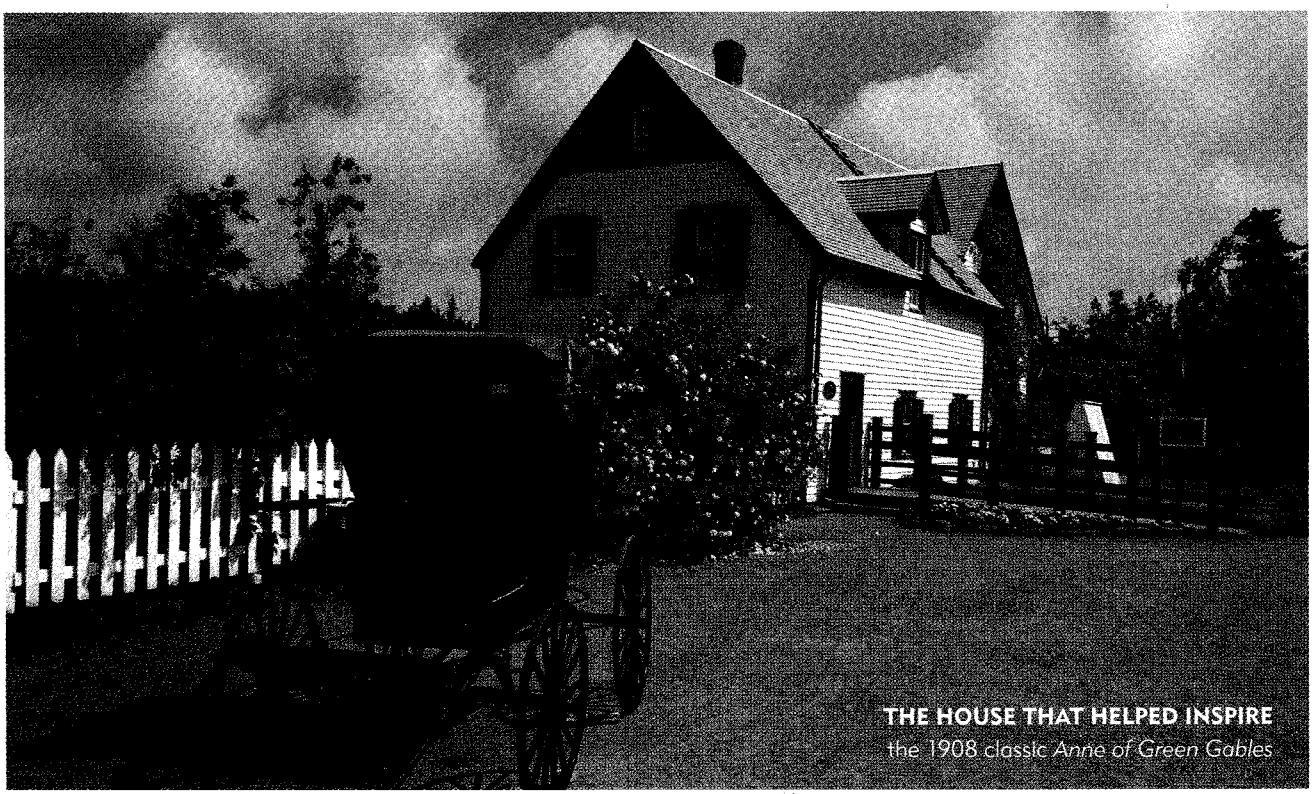

THE HOUSE THAT HELPED INSPIRE the 1908 classic *Anne of Green Gables*

WAYNE CURTIS

TRAVELS

Prince Edward Island has stunning beaches, expansive vistas—and the bizarre, fascinating mix of fact and fiction known as "Anne's Land."

Land of Green Gables

BY WAYNE CURTIS

Prince Edward Island presents a difficult proposition for the guidebook writer. Fact-gathering trips usually involve racing from one spot to the next, scribbling notes on the fly. Yet on several forays here in the 1990s, I learned that the island resists this, instead inducing a slow-motion, vaguely narcotic mood. On the remote North Cape, I'd spend hours lying in the grass, watching the great spinning blades at the experimental wind farm, which had the feel of an art installation by Brancusi had he taken up mesmerism. Or I would find myself doubling back to the Prince Edward Island Preserve Company after coming to the realization over breakfast that I did have room in the car for a few more jars of lemon-ginger marmalade. Chain motels are starting to make inroads here, but the island is still largely the domain of old-fashioned cottage courts, many of them set in its startlingly red potato fields and with views of the ocean in the distance, and these virtually insist on a less frenetic style of vacationing—I'd walk out on my tiny porch in the morning and say hello to my neighbors on their tiny porch, and two cups of coffee later it was noon. Even the slogan of the local newspaper—"Covers Prince Edward Island like the dew"—was something from down the rabbit hole.

Then there was the area around Cavendish, on the island's north shore. This was the heart of what I'd come to think of as the Anne Industrial Complex—a hodgepodge of restored farms and museums and gift shops and amusement parks devoted to Lucy Maud Montgomery and Anne Shirley, the author and heroine, respectively, of the 1908 novel *Anne of Green Gables*. Places where fact and fiction share a single habitat have always fascinated me because of the complicated cultural ecosystems they create—think of Twain's Hannibal, Missouri, or Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon. The place influenced the author, and the author influenced the place, so you end up

MORE ON THEATLANTIC.COM
For a slideshow about "Anne's Land" and Prince Edward Island, narrated by Wayne Curtis, visit www.theatlantic.com/pei.

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THE TRAVEL ADVISORY

What to do

July and August are the peak months for travel to Prince Edward Island, although most tourist venues remain open and several festivals keep visitors entertained throughout the foliage season, in October. The island's main attraction is its red-hued beaches, whose waters are surprisingly warm and swimmable. Most of the beaches lie within **Prince Edward Island National Park**, which charges a daily fee of $7.80 Canadian (now roughly on par with the U.S. dollar). Information on hours and facilities can be found at the Parks Canada Web site (www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/pe/pei-ipe).

Hiking and biking are also major draws, especially along the 170-mile **Confederation Trail**. Converted from a former rail bed, the path runs the length of the island, and traverses scenery ranging from boreal forest and marshes to the expansive, curiously red farm fields, with the landscape opening periodically to ocean views. Spurs off the main trail connect to Charlottetown and other destinations. See www.islandtrails.ca.

Charlottetown (pop. 32,000), the island's capital, is a small, leafy city with sandstone buildings and a colorful harbor filled with pleasure boats; it's home to many of the island's better hotels, motels, and restaurants. **The Confederation Centre of the Arts**, a boxy, brutalist interloper in the midst of downtown, has a large art museum and a theater hosting a mix of musicals (including one based on *Anne*, now in its 44th season) and other productions. In the evenings, **Victoria Row**, near the arts center, is closed to vehicles and is a good place to head for outdoor dining, drinking, and live music.

The city has the additional merit of being centrally located, making for easy day trips to the rest of the island, including, for *Green Gables* aficionados, Anne's Land. Centennial events in honor of the book are listed at www.anne2008.com. The perennial Anne-related attractions can be found at www.gov.pe.ca/greengables.

The island's chief crop is, of course, the potato, and no trip would be complete without a visit to the **PEI Potato Museum** (billed, rather convincingly, as "the only museum of its kind in the world"). The museum (www.peipotatomuseum.com) is in the small town of O'Leary, about 70 miles from Charlottetown. In addition to exhibits on the local history and culture of the potato, it has a 14-foot-tall fiberglass potato out front—an excellent background for family photos.

Where to stay

The Great George (www.innsongreatgeorge.com), in downtown Charlottetown, consists of a cluster of 19th-century town houses and buildings of more recent vintage. All are within walking distance of many restaurants and the waterfront. Doubles start at $209 during peak season.

For a less urban experience, and a bit of Tudor extravagance, try **Dalvay-by-the-Sea** (www.dalvaybythesea.com), a mansion built in 1895 by one of John D. Rockefeller's partners, it's across the road from a remote beach in the national park. The hotel has 26 guest rooms, starting at $280 for doubles.

Where to eat

Flex Mussels (2 Lower Water Street; 902-569-0200), a relaxed restaurant on Charlottetown's waterfront, serves island-cultivated mussels by the pound, prepared in your choice of about two dozen sauces. Especially recommended: Bombay-style, with garlic, curry, ginger, lime, and mango.

Another Charlottetown restaurant, **Lot 30** (151 Kent Street; 902-629-3030), opened this year under one of the island's better-known chefs, Gordon Bailey. He emphasizes fare grown or raised on the island, including the delicately briny local oysters, the sweet island strawberries, and, naturally, potatoes.

exploring a sort of M. C. Escher print. In this way, I'd find myself wandering confusedly around Cavendish, trying to coax apart fact and fiction, until the bugle call of my guidebook deadline summoned me away. (On to Newfoundland!)

This spring, prompted by a newspaper article about *Anne*'s centennial, I reread the book. I'd forgotten how good it is—rich and layered, with hints of Lemony Snicketish schadenfreude and a generous dollop of Jane Austen–style swipes at small-town pettiness. Anne is a redheaded orphan given to great flights of fancy, who is dispatched from a Nova Scotia orphanage to the island farm of the aged siblings Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert. (The Cuthberts had requested an orphan boy to help with chores; they evidently lived in a time when getting farmhands was as easy as ordering things over the Internet, although with similarly poor customer service.) The rest of the book involves her getting into scrapes but rising above them, often by dint of her outsized personality.

The other main character is the landscape itself. The island, Anne said more than once, allowed "scope for the imagination," which the orphan asylum assuredly did not. Most of the descriptive passages are rendered through Anne's eyes, and she was enchanted by everything—from a farm lane overarched with apple blossoms, at the end of which a "painted sunset sky shone like a great rose window at the end of a cathedral aisle," to the red sandstone cliffs along the shore, where "scrub firs, their spirits quite unbroken by long years of tussle with the gulf winds, grew thickly."

Could that land of the imagination still be found? I made my reservations and returned to Cavendish in June.

Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province, is long and vaguely shark-shaped. Tourist brochures divide it into four zones; the part around Cavendish is designated "Anne's Land." The de facto capital of Anne's Land is a farmhouse where some of Montgomery's relations lived; I decided to start my tour there. Montgomery visited the house

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often and used it as inspiration for Green Gables, although she took great license in her depiction—Anne was not the only one prone to fanciful departures. Contemporary photos show a nondescript, unkempt home, not a "big, rambling, orchard-embowered house" with a dooryard neat enough to eat off. Montgomery liked to cite a local saying about the house: "If you wanted to see what the world looked like on the morning after the flood you should go into [the] barnyard on a rainy day!"

Anne and its several sequels were an instant sensation with readers of all ages—the *Harry Potter* books of the Edwardian era—and fans began streaming into Cavendish almost as soon as the first book was published. In the 1930s, the Canadian park service acquired the farm and incorporated it into a new national park. The land around the house became a golf course, and the house was fixed up to square with the descriptions in the novel, right up to the crisply painted gables. Inside, it's bright and orderly—not at all like I'd envisioned from the novel, where it seemed full of the rough chaff of everyday farm life, with plenty of dark corners to nurture the imagination. It was as if a photo stylist had arranged everything neatly for an *Architectural Digest* shoot, circa 1890. I had a hard time visualizing Anne, or anyone for that matter, actually living here.

About half a mile down the road is a relatively new attraction called Avonlea (the fictional name Montgomery gave to Cavendish), which strives to re-create village life as portrayed in the novels. Like many reconstructed villages, it seemed a little too radiant, and was slightly off-kilter. For instance, a "farmhand" in overalls and a straw hat passed by on a unicycle, wanting to know whether I was going to the sack races. Also, a busload's worth of Japanese visitors were wandering excitedly up and down the lanes.

Anne has been hugely popular in Japan since it was first translated there, in 1952; the story of an outcast rising above adversity through pluck evidently resonated with postwar Japanese, who may have seen parallels to their own situation. (Japanese fans are also fascinated by her hair: the book's title in Japan is *Akage No Anne*, or "Anne of the Red Hair.") Each year, several thousand Japanese visit the island in homage to Anne. In an essay published earlier this year in *The Guardian*, the novelist Margaret Atwood described asking an audience in Japan about the book's enduring appeal. She got 32 responses, ranging from the shared love of cherry and apple blossoms to Anne's ability to stand up to "that most formidable of Japanese dragons, the bossy older matron."

JAPANESE FANS OF ANNE in the reconstructed village of Avonlea

WAYNE CURTIS

In Avonlea, I talked to a "village resident" in a minister's collar, who told me he was also a minister in real life and had officiated at more than 500 weddings of Japanese couples, mostly at the Anne of Green Gables Museum. This is the farm where Montgomery herself was married, and the couples go to great lengths to duplicate her ceremony, right down to the wedding cake, which is made from the same recipe. I later chatted with two college students visiting from Japan, who were sitting in a sleigh, wearing smocks over their dresses and straw hats with pre-attached red braids—headgear as easily obtained in Cavendish as Mickey Mouse hats are in Disneyland. "This has always been my dream," one said.

All this was weirdly compelling—and explains the host of island signs and brochures in Japanese—but I began to feel as if I were falling from one Escher print into another. So I went back to the main crossroads of Cavendish, paid $4, and walked the short distance to the farm where Montgomery was raised, and where she wrote *Anne*. All that remains is a roped-off cellar hole, kept trim and clean as a loaf pan. I sat on a bench at the edge of the erstwhile dooryard and listened to warblers. Corduroyed fields of grain were visible to the south, looking much as they must have when Montgomery walked them each day before sitting down to write. Here, I started to feel a little more scope for the imagination.

Later that afternoon I rented a bike and went to Cavendish Grove, a park with biking and walking trails that connect to the national park and its woods of black-barked spruces draped with pale, beardlike mosses. I pedaled beneath tall trees down a deserted red-dirt road, eventually emerging at a marsh where statuelike herons stabbed at fish. A large fox trotted regally down the road ahead of me like a character from a fable, then veered off into the undergrowth. At the end of the road, I stashed the bike in the marram grass and followed a trail over the dunes to a beach lapped by quiet surf. The sand was pink and scattered with rust-colored boulders.

I found a rock the size of an ottoman and sat down. Looking out on the ocean, I recalled what Anne saw when she surveyed the same vista: "All silver and shadow and vision of things not seen."

Anne's Prince Edward Island is still here, I was pleased to discover. It just takes a bit of imagination to find it.

Wayne Curtis is a regular contributor to *The Atlantic*.

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FOOD

When bakers break up, who gets custody of the recipes?

Half a Loaf

BY CORBY KUMMER

How to protect a creation that can take weeks or years to perfect? This has ever bedeviled inventors, but has been particularly vexing for people who try to make their living by cooking. Recipes are practically impossible to copyright. Famous examples of chefs who spawned a thousand imitations include Johanne Killeen and George Germon, who claim to have invented grilled pizza or at least to have been the first to popularize it. I will gladly go many miles to Al Forno, their Providence restaurant, to enjoy it. But even though they published the recipe in their first cookbook and get credit on Wikipedia, they haven't gotten a commission from the hundreds of chefs who put grilled pizza on their menus, or royalties from the Web sites that print their original recipe—let alone from the thousands of sites that feature recipes for grilled pizza.

CLONES: Is it Sullivan St or Grandaisy?

CARLA ESCOE

Intellectual property in the age of the Internet has been a thorn in the side of every writer, but cookbook writers feel like so many Saint Sebastians, regularly seeing their recipes printed word for word on Web sites without attribution. Barbara Kafka, the author of many books including *Soup: A Way of Life* and *Roasting: A Simple Art*, first brought this to my attention. About 30 of her recipes, she said, appeared unattributed on the provocatively named otherpeoples recipes.com, and she'd seen plenty more very familiar but nameless recipes on other sites. Before the Internet, writers who discovered their recipes in other books could demand credit in later printings, as Barbara Tropp, author of *The Modern Art of Chinese Cooking*, did with Martha Stewart's seminal *Entertaining*. Many years ago, I raised my own minor ruckus when I discovered a recipe I had published in this magazine in the galleys of a new book by a very famous baker. The recipe was for almond biscotti (*biscotti di Prato*), in the days when the very word was new to American cookie culture, and I made 18 batches before getting the glass-crunchy texture I was determined to achieve. "Adapted from" my recipe, the introductory note said. What followed was a recipe identical in ingredients, instructions, and timings. Flattered though I was by her claim that this was the one cookie she could never be without, I protested. The author devised a new version with butter (my recipe was fatless save for eggs and nuts), leaving my biscotti to remain my small contribution to the ages.

Those days seem very quaint. Uncredited reprints in books can require redress or, at the least, acknowledgment, because other authors can profit from purloined work (we won't go into the current state of the cookbook business). But the already elastic rules of "fair use" get very stretchy on the Internet. Blogs are generally written with no view (or realistic hope) of profit in mind; sites that do sell advertising can easily lift recipes whose attributions have already been shorn. Angry authors are left to start their own blogs (as Kafka has), placing book-buying links front and center, and hope for the brass ring—a TV show.

Reserving rights to a recipe is even harder once a dish goes onto a menu. Chefs constantly look to other chefs for ideas. Daniel Boulud's sea bass roasted in paper-thin potato slices that look like fish scales was one of the most copied dishes of the 1980s; Nobu Matsuhisa's miso-marinated black cod that of the 1990s; David Chang's irresistibly fatty Berkshire pork shoulder at his Momofuku Ssäm Bar, in New York, will probably be so flattered. Those dishes don't get credit on other people's menus, let alone spin royalties. Chefs who want to turn their names into money look elsewhere: TV shows, magazines, product lines, licensing and franchise agreements, and today's kitchen jackpot—a Las Vegas location.

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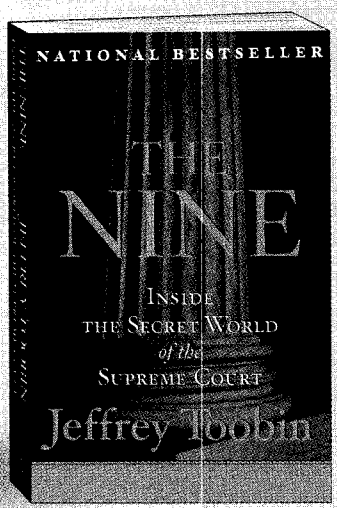

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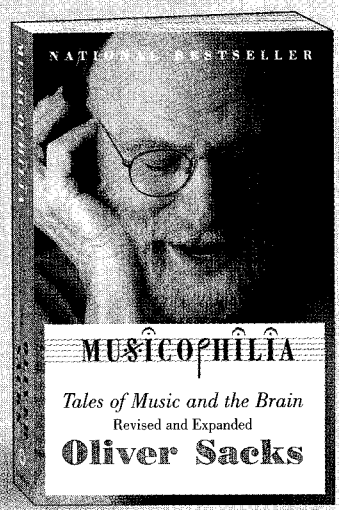

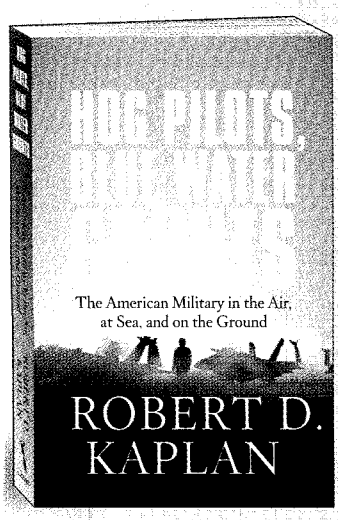

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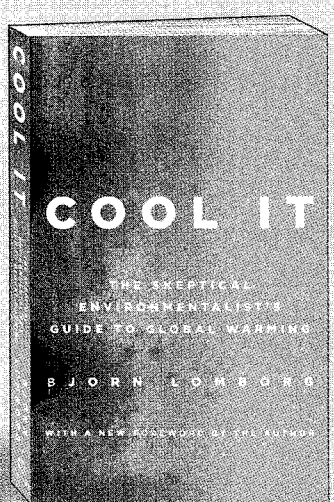

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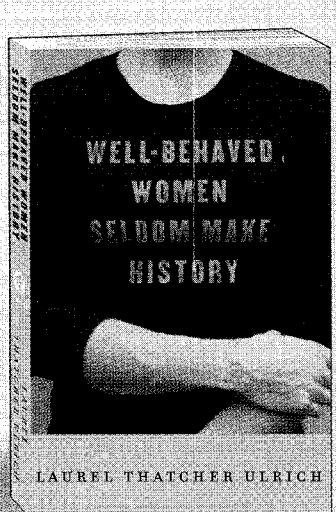

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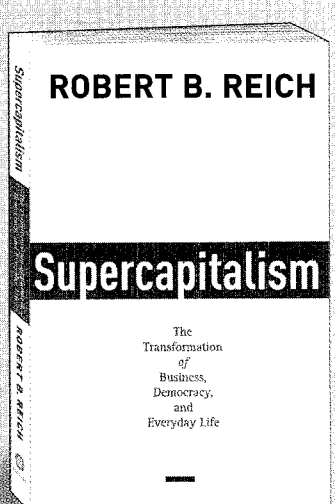

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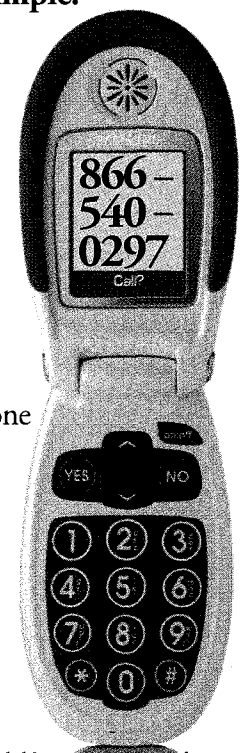

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If nothing is new in food, as someone invariably points out in such discussions, think of the challenges that face anyone dedicated to the staff of life. Flour, water, and yeast are Old Testament elemental. The idea of patenting a bread seems antithetical to the generous spirit that moves most cooks and, I would add, nearly every baker. (To my mind pretty much everything besides bread is a dietary supplement.) Since *The Italian Baker* was published, in 1985, I have watched several of Carol Field's recipes and techniques for previously unknown Italian breads spread across the land like the sloppy, barely yeasted, unmanageably wet doughs that, as her book taught, result in the lightest, best-flavored bread. She's seldom credited, of course.

An early Field adherent has long been my favorite baker in New York: Jim Lahey, who opened the Sullivan St Bakery in 1994 selling breads no one in the city had made before. Some of them he discovered by going to towns Field mentioned, like Genzano, south of Rome, where he found the bread that inspired his *filone* ("fat thread," a word sometimes used for baguettes)—a holey loaf shaped like a small dachshund or a 1920s floor-model vacuum cleaner. Like most of his signature breads, it's dark and crisp-crusted, with a light, airy crumb and a bare tang. With its unmistakable circular slice, the filone soon turned up in discerning restaurants' bread baskets, and so did *pane pugliese*, a flatter loaf made with the same dough; Lahey named it in honor of the southern Italian region famous for its bread (no loaf in Italy is called "pugliese"). Sullivan St became the name to look and ask for, and the bakery's one retail outlet, in SoHo, became the place to go for the incredibly airy, oil-brushed, lightly salted *pizza bianca*, which is even better than that of the bakery in Rome's Campo de' Fiori, Lahey's model and mentor. ("Sullivan" seems to have good associations with good bread: the big bang of American bread was the opening of Steve Sullivan's Acme Bread, in the Bay Area, in 1983.)

Outside of restaurants, though, the bread could be hard to come by. So at the end of last year, I was delighted to dis-

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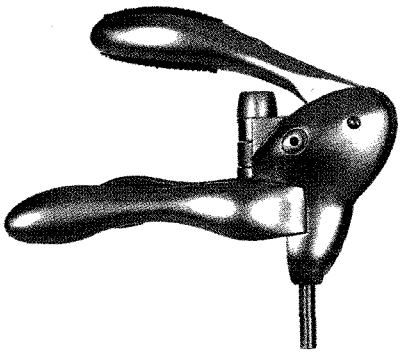

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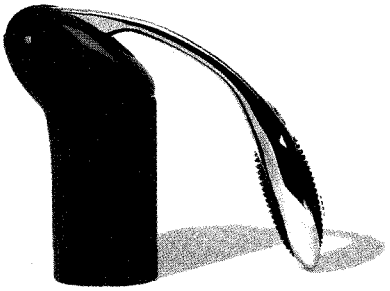

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cover a small storefront selling all the familiar Sullivan St breads and two cookies that, like everything Sullivan St makes, are exemplary: *biscotti pratesi* (almost as good as mine) and *ossi di morti*, shatterlight meringues with almonds. The location, at 72nd Street and Broadway, was convenient to my brother's apartment, where I stay, and perfect for buying and packing a loaf of the incomparable sesame bread—not just scattered with but rolled in a dense bed of sesame seeds—just before going to the airport. The name was unfamiliar: Grandaisy, with a pretty pale-blue daisy logo on the bags. The clerks reassured me that indeed, the bread was the same.

products: that of the two founders of Magnolia Bakery, which shot to fame after its way-too-cute cupcakes provided consolation to the women on *Sex and the City*. The television exposure started a cupcake craze in which tourists make pilgrimages to the West Village original (it's a wonder there aren't Japanese tourists dressed as cupcakes, or at least as Samantha). In a non-cute spat that delighted tabloids, the two women parted ways, and one of them opened a rival bakery called Buttercup Bake Shop. The owner of Buttercup (Magnolia has changed hands) did not want to talk to me about the split. But I noted with interest that when I asked for Magnolia Bakery

> The idea of patenting a bread seems antithetical to the generous spirit that moves most cooks and nearly every baker.

Sort of. When I recently ran into Lahey, a longtime acquaintance and an inexhaustible source of pungent, often profanity-strewn, quotes, I told him how happy I was finally to be able to buy Sullivan St breads every time I came to New York. "Those aren't Sullivan St breads," he said drily. Whaat?

The explanation, I learned when I went to see Lahey at his new Sullivan St Bakery headquarters in the far-west reaches of Hell's Kitchen, was a romantic breakup that devolved into a rocky professional partnership that ended in a complete business split. Now there were two bakeries with two different names selling breads and cookies identically named and to all appearances utterly identical, one owned by Lahey and the other by his former partner, Monica Von Thun Calderón. Talk about confusion in the marketplace! I was certainly confused. I wondered how the Siamese twins had been parted, and how the twin breads would taste when reunited and compared.

I was put in mind of a much better-known baking breakup, which coincidentally has put two more bakeries on the Upper West Side selling very similar

on a call to 800-GOOG411, the free voice-activated directory-assistance service, the first listing I got was for Buttercup. (Maybe Google really is omniscient: Buttercup is the much better baker.)

However entertainingly operatic, the details of the Sullivan St separation are too complicated to go into here, and subject to the same side-choosing as in any divorce. A side story of skulduggery is more dramatic still, if potentially litigious: as Lahey tells it, a former distributor of Sullivan St breads hired former Sullivan St bakers to start his own bakery, opened suddenly with an extremely similar product line, and started making deliveries to Sullivan St customers with no notice of a change of vendor—initially in stockpiled bags with the Sullivan St name and logo, yet. "It was almost the perfect crime!" Lahey says Mario Batali called out to him one day, getting off his Vespa. (A lawsuit Lahey brought against the distributor over money he was owed was settled out of court.) The threat to their business galvanized Lahey and Von Thun Calderón to join in battle, and within a year they had won back many of

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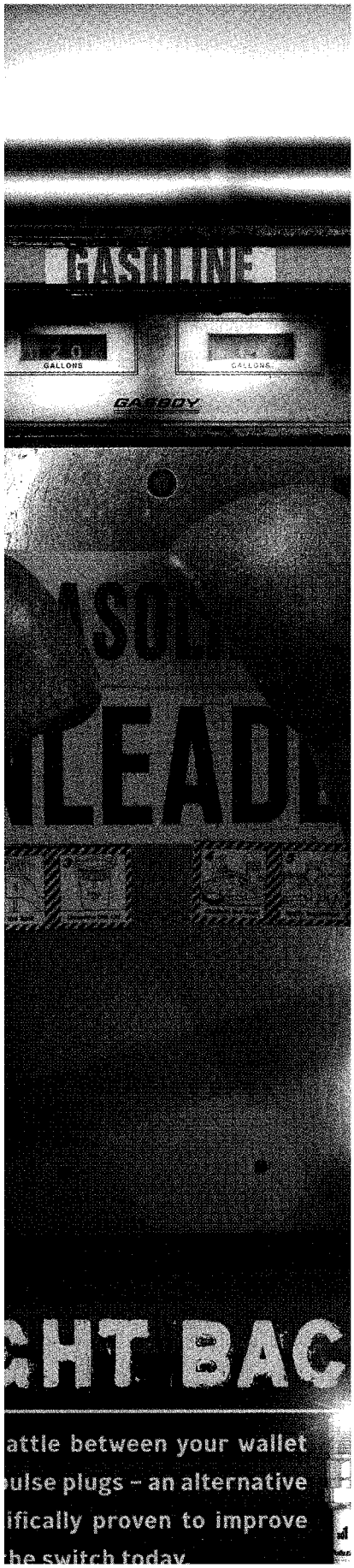

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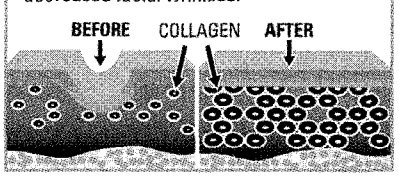

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their lost customers. But after weathering the crisis, the sparring partners split for good two years ago.

Now customers have to choose sides, and going by name and appearance won't help. Aside from the two apparently twin bakeries and also the former distributor, who all sell to many restaurants and supermarkets, other reputable bakers are selling filones and puglieses—breads that hadn't existed in New York before Lahey starting selling them. But he didn't think to invent a word—like, say, *frappuccino*, which turned out to be the most valuable part of the lamented Coffee Connection chain when Starbucks bought it (or at least the part that Starbucks most valued)—that could be trademarked; instead, he picked names that had other established usages. It would be challenging to trademark them.

Not impossible, though, as Jeffrey Lindenbaum, a lawyer at a firm specializing in intellectual property who represents Lahey, explained to me. A "secondary meaning" of a geographically descriptive term like *pugliese* (or another kind of term) can be claimed after the product has been in commerce for five years or the manufacturer produces convincing evidence that the name has acquired "distinctiveness." (Incredibly, numerous bread companies obtained trademarks on names for breads that include the word *ciabatta*, a common enough Italian term meaning "slipper" that was unknown in this country before Carol Field published a recipe for a then-obscure regional bread. Obviously, enforcing a trademark presents its own set of challenges.) Or, if the appearance of a loaf, like the fat filone, is different from anything else on the market, it can qualify for a "trade dress" trademark (think of a Coke bottle). Or, if the way of making the bread is revolutionary, a baker can apply for a "method patent."

But Lahey never thought to try for any exotic trademarks or patents. He sought trademark counsel only during the formal split, in which he got the Sullivan St Bakery name and Von Thun Calderón got the original location on Sullivan Street, which she renamed

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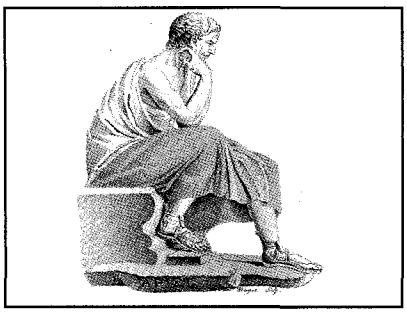

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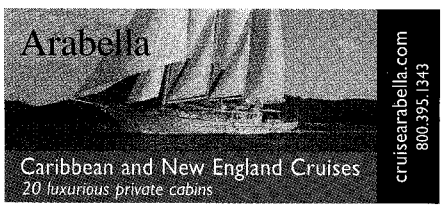
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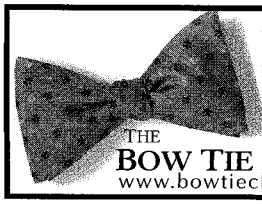
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"Grandaisy." And, as she explained when I visited her at the original premises, "his nature is to change things." She, by contrast, wanted to keep alive a "beautiful community bakery," one that would be a "nice place to work." A former graduate student in anthropology who was raised in Colorado by Bolivian and American parents, Von Thun Calderón calls running a bakery in New York, with its workers from many countries whom she encourages to get professional certification and GEDs, "applied anthropology extraordinaire—we're an NGO that makes money."

Both former partners took the high road in a comparative blind tasting I asked each one to do (separately, of course!) of three of their signature breads. They gamely participated, closing their eyes while I cut slices as identical as possible in crumb-to-crust ratio, chewing carefully with their eyes still shut, and not hesitating—going out of their way, in fact—to say when they thought a bread they suspected wasn't theirs was better. "This has a nice malty flavor to the crust," Lahey said of a pugliese roll that turned out to be Grandaisy's, and called his pizza bianca "woefully underseasoned" (he thought Grandaisy's was too). Von Thun Calderón thought the crust of Sullivan St's sesame bread—a poor choice for a comparison, she gently pointed out, "because all you taste is delicious toasted sesame seeds"—was "more complex and layered and chewy" than hers, and wondered why her filone had a wild-yeast smell but didn't taste as sour as she thought it would. She also wondered why Lahey's bread was so much yellower than hers, even though she assumed they use the same flour.

The answer gets back to the question of intellectual property. In fact Lahey did come up with a revolutionary bread-making method, one that caused an enormous stir when *The New York Times* published an article about it: "no-knead" bread, which takes Field's oft-stated principles of minimal yeast and maximal rising times to days-long extremes. Bloggers couldn't stop praising the recipe, and it became one of the paper's most e-mailed articles. Lahey says that readers come to his bakery simply to meet the man who let them have tasty homemade bread on their own tables every day. "It would be nice if they paid me a little something!" he said. "Or at least bought some of my bread." But they don't—they love their own bread, they say proudly—and none of the other bakeries that copy him pay him, either.

And in the larger picture, he says, that's fine. The no-knead method was born at the request of an Italian cook who wanted to serve a Roman-era bread at a Roman-themed dinner, and was Lahey's attempt to reproduce the most ancient way of making bread. To try to patent it would be absurd. Using the method at his bakery has resulted in a much more tranquil work environment. "What didn't you hear?" he asked after a few hours of tasting and conversation at a table overlooking the production floor. "The *whir-whir* of mixers." The reduced working of the dough results in a yellower crumb—the clearest visual difference between the two bakeries' breads. Lahey got a book contract as a result of the *Times* article, and he is about to open a new restaurant called "Co.," serving pizzas and bread. A successful restaurant can bring the kind of name recognition—and potential for self-branding—that bakeries don't, no matter how wondrous their breads.

Besides, the market for "craft bread" is so small, he says, that rather than squabble, bakers should do their best to help each other increase sales and steal back sales from the industrial producers that caught on to the idea that "artisanal" bread sells ("I hate the word *artisanal*"). He wants to start a group called the Craft Bakers' Association to share knowledge and also use collective buying power—something essential for small bakers, who have been hit by the sudden rise in the price of flour. Since December 2006, Von Thun Calderón says, her flour bills have tripled. In unity there is strength. His former partner, Lahey told me, will be the first baker he asks to join his group. A

Corby Kummer is an *Atlantic* senior editor.

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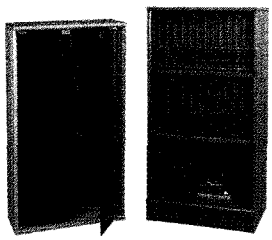

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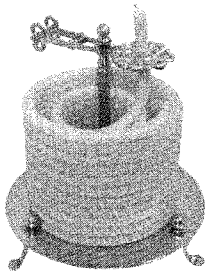

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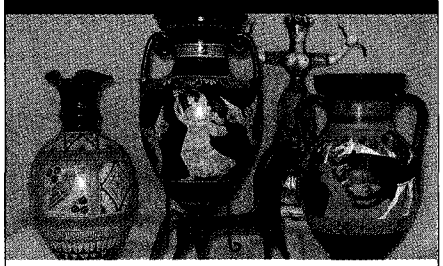

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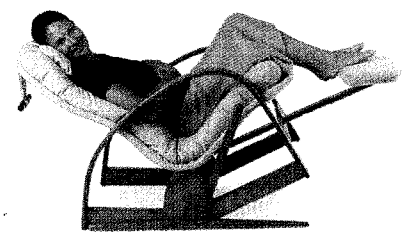

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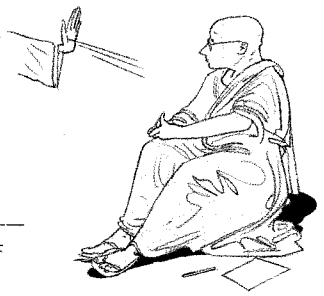


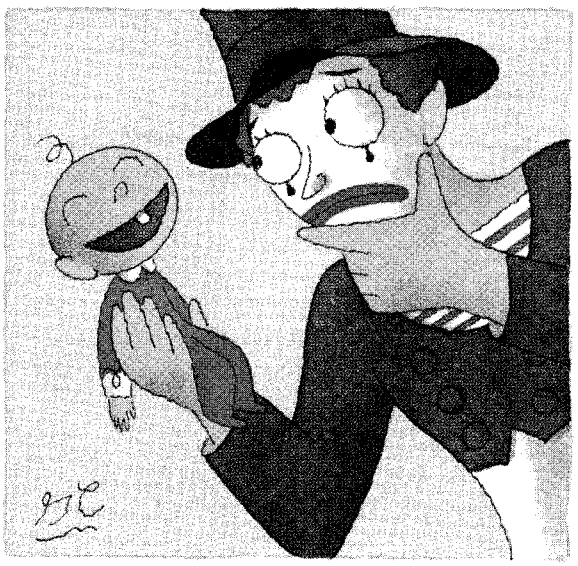
WORD FUGITIVES

BY BARBARA WALLRAFF

What would be a good word for things like ATMs or drugstores "that seem ubiquitous when you aren't looking for them but that are nowhere to be found when you are"? Such was one of the fugitives requested in the May *Atlantic*. Brendan Moore, of Durham, N.C., wrote, "My wife and I refer to this phenomenon as *every nowhere*. Other things that fall into this category include gas stations, restaurants open after 10 p.m., and police cars when you see a dangerous driver."

Neverywhere was probably the most popular suggestion. Runners-up include *unbiquitous*, *ubiquitless*, and *fewbiquitous*. Helen Reich, of West Melbourne, Australia, suggested *ubi-quit-on-ous*; and Sheila Tombe, of Lady's Island, S.C., *ubiquitisn't*. Brett Price, of Austin, Texas, proposed *omnipresen't*; Patricia Peters, of East Norriton, Pa., *omniabsent*; and Glen Henderson, of Toronto, *omnevanescent*.

Among the quirkier suggestions received were *vanishing points*, from Terry Munson, of Pawleys Island, S.C.; *ameniteases*, from Chandler Fulton, of New York City; *fair-weather vends*, from Dan Tanner, of Bloomington, Minn.; *serenmissity*, from Marc Bloch, of Seattle; *hydensequitous*, from Bill Andrews, of Bon Air, Va.; and *perversive*, from Bob Lewis, of Richland, Wash. Mike Nugent, of Denver, sent in a word that was not only distinctive but also specific and relatively clear: *elusiversal*. Nugent takes top honors.



The other May fugitive was "a word for an attempt, using facial expressions, to make a stranger's baby smile." A number of readers focused on the sound effects that would go along with the smile. Carl Kay, of Tokyo, wrote, "When a long-sullen baby suddenly expresses contentment in response to the exaggerated gestures of an adult, it is called a *coo de théâtre*." Shane Feldhaus, of Minnetonka, Minn., proposed *coo-ercion*; Marge Kennedy, of New York City, *coogling*; and Jessica Chen, of Oyster Bay, N.Y., *seek-a-coo*.

Ted Wendt, of Modesto, Calif., wrote, "What you're doing is, obviously, making a *babyface*." Andrew Madigan, of Brooklyn, N.Y., suggested the phrase *pramming it up*. John Tobin, of Hampton, N.H., wrote, "Trying to make a baby laugh solely by the use of facial expressions might be called *pramtomime*." Jamie Bronstein, of Las Cruces, N.M., suggested *pedagoggling*; Chris Rooney, of Berkeley, Calif., *pediantics*; Charles P. Seltman, of Divide, Colo., *infantics*; and Susan Teltser-Schwarz, of Scarsdale, N.Y., *infantomime*. Worthy ideas all, but Amanda Coutts, of Providence, R.I., takes top honors for *sycoinfancy*.

Now MICHAEL MCWATTERS, of New York City, writes, "I use a computer for the better part of my waking life, and I've noticed that certain repetitive keyboard tasks are making their way into my non-computer life. For example, I recently knocked a jar off the counter, and a little voice inside yelped, *Command-Z!* (the keyboard shortcut for Undo). Ditto for the time I accidentally ripped a page in a book. A friend mentioned that she recently lost her keys and thought, *Command-F* (Find). There should be a term for this confusion, as it's only going to become more common."

Send words that meet Michael McWatters's need to Word Fugitives, The Atlantic, *P.O. Box 67375, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, or visit the Word Fugitives page on our Web site, at www.theatlantic.com/fugitives. Submissions must be received by October 31. Use the same addresses to submit word fugitives that you'd like* The Atlantic's *help in finding. Letters become the property of Word Fugitives and may be edited.*

Readers whose queries are published and those whose words are singled out for top honors will each receive, with our thanks, More Words That Make a Difference, *by Robert and Carol Greenman; and my own* Word Fugitives.

The November issue will introduce a revamped Word page, with one new fugitive in every issue, instead of the usual two in every other issue. We'll also be adding a blog by Barbara Wallraff on theatlantic.com, including a place where you can post your ideas for the words that fugitive-hunters are seeking.

GREG CLARKE

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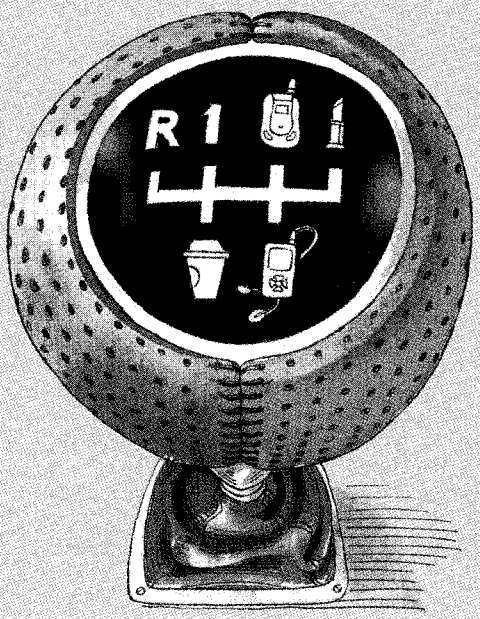

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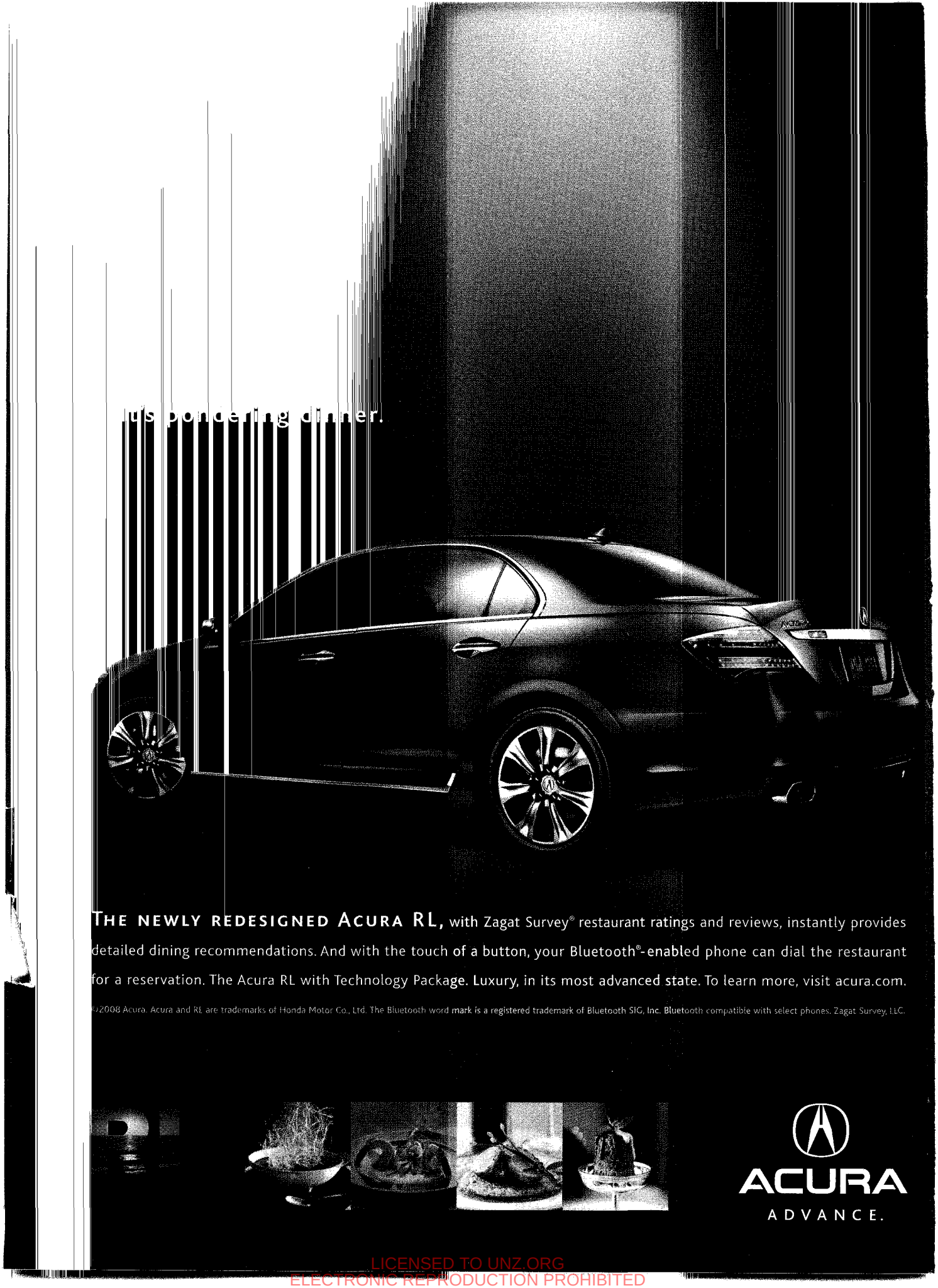

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